Western Illinois Regional Studies

Fall 1989
Special issue:
Bishop Hill

WESTERN ILLINOIS REGIONAL STUDIES

Published semiannually by
the University Libraries
and the College of Arts and Sciences
at Western Illinois University
Macomb, Illinois 61455

BOARD OF EDITORS

JAY R. BALDERSON
DONALD W. GRIFFIN
GORDANA REZAB
ROBERT P. SUTTON
JOHN E. HALLWAS, *Chairman*

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

DAVID D. ANDERSON, *Michigan State University*
MICHAEL BECKES, *United States Forest Service*
RICHARD W. CROCKETT, *Western Illinois University*
JAMES E. DAVIS, *Illinois College*
RODNEY DAVIS, *Knox College*
ARLIN D. FENTEM, *Western Illinois University*
MYRON J. FOGDE, *Augustana College*
FRANK W. GOUDY, *Western Illinois University*
THOMAS E. HELM, *Western Illinois University*
ROBERT JOHANNSEN, *University of Illinois*
FREDERICK G. JONES, *Western Illinois University*
JERRY KLEIN, *"Peoria Journal Star"*
CHARLES W. MAYER, *Western Illinois University*
DENNIS Q. McINERNY, *College of St. Thomas*
RONALD E. NELSON, *Bishop Hill Heritage Association*
RONALD E. NELSON, *Western Illinois University*
STUART STRUEVER, *Northwestern University*
ROALD D. TWEET, *Augustana College*
WILLIAM L. URBAN, *Monmouth College*
ELLEN M. WHITNEY, *Editor emeritus, "Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society"*
DOUGLAS WILSON, *Knox College*

Subscription rates are $4.00 a year for individuals and $6.00 for institutions. Single issues are $2.00. Articles published in *WIRS* are listed in the *MLA International Bibliography*, *America: History and Life*, and other appropriate bibliographies.

Correspondence about subscriptions, contributions, and books for review should be sent to the Chairman of the Board of Editors, *Western Illinois Regional Studies*, Western Illinois University, Macomb, Illinois 61455. Bibliographic and other information for the Notes and Documents section should be sent to Professor Gordana Rezab at the same address.

WESTERN ILLINOIS REGIONAL STUDIES

VOLUME XII FALL 1989 NUMBER 2

CONTENTS

Special Issue: Bishop Hill

Editor's Introduction 5

Eric Janssonism: Community and Freedom in Nineteenth-Century Sweden and America 7
Wayne Wheeler

The Eric-Janssonists and the Shifting Contours of Community 17
H. Arnold Barton

The Bishop Hill Colony: What they Found 36
Ronald E. Nelson

The Building of Bishop Hill 46
Ronald E. Nelson

Living in Community: Daily Life in the Bishop Hill Colony 61
Jon Wagner

The Folk Genre Paintings of Olof Krans as Historical Documents 82
Elise Schebler Dawson

Bibliography of English Language Publications on Bishop Hill 105

Reviews of Books 109

Contributors 115

Copyright 1989 by Western Illinois University.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

Hill, QUEST FOR REFUGE: THE MORMON FLIGHT FROM AMERICAN PLURALISM 109
By Roger D. Launius

Marshall, LAND FEVER: DISPOSSESSION AND THE FRONTIER MYTH 110
By Marcia Noe

Boritt and Forness, THE HISTORIAN'S LINCOLN: PSEUDOHISTORY, PSYCHOHISTORY, AND HISTORY 111
By Cullom Davis

Guillory, LIVING WITH LINCOLN 113
By Steve Fay

EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION

This special issue of *Western Illinois Regional Studies* is based upon a 1989 Lecture Series sponsored by the Bishop Hill Heritage Association on the topic "Bishop Hill: the New Jerusalem." The public lectures, each by a recognized specialist on Bishop Hill, were presented on Sunday afternoons at the Colony School beginning on January 28 and ending on April ninth. They covered almost every aspect of scholarly inquiry into the story of Bishop Hill as seen from a variety of perspectives, such as history, sociology, anthropology, geography, archaeology and historic preservation, and art criticism. The participants themselves came from the University of Nebraska-Omaha, Southern Illinois University-Carbondale, Western Illinois University, Knox College, the State Historical Society of Iowa, Des Moines, and, of course, the Bishop Hill Heritage Association. This issue of *Western Illinois Regional Studies* is the first major publication on Bishop Hill since Paul Elmen's *Wheat Flour Messiah* (Southern Illinois University Press, 1976).

I have edited the content of the papers and slightly reordered them from the format of the lecture series itself in order to give the reader a chronological sequence of the story of Bishop Hill. The first article, by Wayne Wheeler, "Eric Janssonism: Community and Freedom in Nineteenth Century Sweden and America," touches upon the background to the immigration of the Janssonists. The second piece, "The Eric-Janssonists and the Shifting Contours of Community" by H. Arnold Barton, picks up on the situation in Sweden in the 1840s but goes on to give a detailed historical account of the development and demise of the Janssonists' experiment in America. Ronald E. Nelson, of the Geography Department of Western Illinois University, then explains the environmental factors that affected the growth, and initial success, of Bishop Hill. Next, Ronald E. Nelson, Executive Director of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association, brings his expertise in historic preservation to the colony's architecture and, in "The Building of Bishop Hill," shows how its structures reflected a commitment to communal living. Jon Wagner, an anthropologist, explores the dynamics of everyday affairs in "Living in Community: Daily Life in the Bishop Hill Colony." Elise Schebler Dawson, formerly Curator at the Bishop Hill Heritage Association but currently on the staff of the State Historical Society of Iowa at Des Moines, analyzes the colony as seen in the paintings of Olof Krans in "The Folk Genre Paintings of Olaf Krans as Historical Documents." Finally, Yolanda Ortega, Coordinator of the Heritage Association and the individual most responsible for producing this lecture series, put together an up-to-date bibliography of English language sources on the Bishop Hill colony.

Collectively, the authors give a comprehensive account of Bishop Hill from beginning to end in well-written and thoroughly researched articles. The reader is made aware of the most recent interpretations of the colony as well as presented with the most recent scholarship in a broad range of disciplines—both in English and Swedish language sources. Their investigations are exhaustive and cover

published histories, monographs, professional articles, newspaper sources, dissertations and theses, letters and diaries, on-site structures, artifacts, and visual representations. Their findings are amply illustrated with over forty photographs, maps, and tables, many of which appear for the first time in print. This editor hopes that the reader will appreciate, and enjoy, the effort that went into the creation of the lecture series and, that he or she will, more than ever, want to visit the colony and savor first hand, at this standing museum, testimony to America's only Swedish communal settlement, the Swedish heritage, pioneer perseverance, and contributions to the region of western Illinois well over a century ago.

Robert P. Sutton
September, 1989

ERIC JANSSONISM: COMMUNITY AND FREEDOM IN NINETEENTH-CENTURY SWEDEN AND AMERICA

Wayne Wheeler

Sweden, despite the fact that it had been a leading economic and military power of Northern Europe from the late sixteenth century to its loss of empire during the eighteenth century, found itself in the closing years of the Napoleonic Era to be an essentially economically backward nation. With the civilizing refinements for the aristocracy and the higher peasantry of the Enlightenment, a parliamentary estates system that would not be abolished until 1866, and a geographically remote position, Sweden was underdeveloped industrially, rural in economy, and in the backwash of world affairs.[1]

It is also correct to point out that by 1810 it had begun a slow internal development and had embarked on a foreign policy that has for most of the past two centuries left it without a great revolution and at peace in conventionally defined military conflict. Among the factors which have contributed to Sweden's internal and external tranquility have been its gradual secularization, its great population exodus, and its combined tendencies toward business acumen and humanitarianism.

This paper treats of an instance which in many respects is nearly a paradigm of Sweden's development from a rural, pre-urban industrial, premodern society through, minimally, its take-off to modernism. The problem for Sweden, however, was that it did not seem quite ready, historically, economically, and institutionally to avail itself of the opportunity which arose.

In Sweden, a great religious reawakening—almost a second Reformation—took place commencing about 1840 and continuing for forty or fifty years afterward. Until this time—and indeed during it—the established state church had been dominated by an entrenched body of officialdom in its upper reaches and a rationalistic, classically-educated priesthood at the parish level.[2]

Prior to this transformation, the church and its bishops had enjoyed medieval-like privileges. In the parishes, every child had to be baptised and receive catechetical instruction. In order to enjoy the rights of citizenship, including marriage and employment, each confirmed person had to take communion at least once each year. The church was the center of the community. Additionally, the priest was charged with the responsibility to teach respect for God and government and obedience to law and order. It was a rash act, for example, not to doff one's hat upon meeting the local priest.

Hälsingland, Sweden. The location of Jansson's mission in the 1840s. Courtesy of Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

The pastoral position combined the duties of both the clergy and civil administration including maintaining the census of births, marriages and deaths, vaccination, and the Sunday market in the church yard. The priest, for all his local pastoral responsibilities, was essentially isolated and at odds with his parishioners. His university training had emphasized liturgies, symbols, and dogma—the stuff of a dry formalism that turned the church into a "magnificent ice palace." The church from top to bottom had control of the minds and bodies of the citizenry and, of course, viewed any effort at reform as a threat to both institutional and personal privilege. It was, in short, an institution of mechanical form and ceremony that regarded variation in liturgy and emotional response as a challenge to its authority. Length of service and teaching in the advanced institutions of Enlightenment and rationalism without regard to moral qualification became the basis for advancement up the rungs of the ecclesiastical hierarchy.[3]

There entered into this situation certain factors of non-Swedish origin: Pietism from Germany, Evangelicalism from England and, from America, the dual vision of religious freedom and economic opportunity. Sweden itself contributed, in addition to the ointment of economic backwardness and political and religious rigidity, the most important element of near-universal literacy.[4]

Into this mix, about 1840, came various groups of religious dissenters collectively known as "läsare" or "readers" respected for their ability to read the Bible for themselves and to interpret it according to their own experience and needs. Armed with the self-satisfaction of piety and the emotional aggression of evangelism, the readers were very much an early movement of "born agains" and closely akin to their slightly older contemporaries, the Wesleyans in England.

Among the first of the Swedish dissenters was a group which arose in Hälsingland, a provence somewhat north of Stockholm. These "readers" became known as "Janssonists" after their leader, Eric Jansson, who mixed a talent for hard work, dynamic preaching, and bourgeois entrepreneuralism. At first Jansson attempted to adhere to a Lutheran piety that told him to be content with his God-ordained station—his "stand"—in life. But when he traveled on business to Uppsala and observed drunkenness, profanity, and prostitution at the very seat of Swedish Christendom, he somehow felt the need to seek grace by awakening the church to the sins of the flesh which surrounded and, indeed, infused it.[5]

Jansson's charismatic preaching and his constant quotation of the Bible as his authority for attacks on the established church were not, of course, viewed with much favor by the church itself. In short, he was branded a Separatist, a revolutionary, and even a heretic. At this point, he found it convenient to load up a wagon with wheat flour—the less prestigious rye was the grain in common use among the peasantry—and head for Hälsingland where the groundwork had been prepared by enthusiastic religionists including the American Robert Baird, a Presbyterian, and the Englishman George Scott, a Methodist. Here, Jansson made contact with the local läsare who in his view desired spirituality and God's grace but had no saving power, always seeking forgiveness but never feeling forgiven, always wracked with sin.[6]

Jansson, on the other hand, claimed to have lived for three years without sin. Jansson, for reasons to which we have alluded, had become a Perfectionist and believed that it is possible for one who walked in fellowship with others and in the blood of Jesus, in the light of God the Father, to be cleansed from all sin. Perfectionism was one route to personal and social development in a period when a former way of life was becoming increasingly obsolete.[7] Sweden was, however, still pre-industrial and not yet prepared institutionally nor in social psychology for the advances of urban-industrialization that had taken place or were about to take place in other parts of Europe.

Herein lay the dilemma of the strong-willed Eric Jansson: how to erect a new world out of the bits and pieces of the Sweden he knew without the constraints of that old order; namely, those imposed by the integration of state and church enforced on the bodies and minds of local populations by parish priests. To respond to this problem Jansson turned for his clues to the social organization of the agricultural village, which of course was well-known to him, and to his knowledge of the Bible which, aside from the emotional unsatisfactory account-keeping that his business provided, was the only source of knowledge and intellectual challenge open to him. But, again, the Bible and other sources of learning were officially the exclusive domain of that dreaded authority figure, the parish priest.

Any millennial movement sees the present as evil and corrupt, which was certainly true of the pietists in view of their direct experiences with the church and the economy.[8] The time of the present and the elements of tradition are worthy only of radical rejection. Useful ways of achieving the millenium are to migrate and to destroy the sacred symbols and objects of tradition. In the instance of Eric Jansson and his followers the authorities were especially helpful with harassment, arrests, and threats of arrest in the decision to migrate. The Janssonists were able to achieve the destruction of images on their own.

In Jansson's experience, the locus of everything hated about the state church was in the rationality of the priests and the theology contained in the books they read. Better to burn the books than the priests! If one is moved by the Holy Spirit and has the Bible, what else of the hated learning—the false teaching—is needed? In 1844 Jansson carried out several book burnings.

The situation was right for the migration to America: escape from the unsettled and painful situations in the Old World; a feeling of security that comes from traveling with like-minded companions under strong leadership. In addition, here was the vision of the United States as the larger utopia of justice, individual freedom, and happiness (already spelled out in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution), and letters written by previous immigrants and, of course, land agents pictured equality, religious liberty, and economic freedom.

After several scrapes with the law because of his holding private religious services, Jansson and other leaders of the movement decided to flee. America, the great utopia across the Atlantic, was the answer. A series of sailings in the latter half of the decade of the 1840s eventually brought 1,500 followers to Illinois. The New Jerusalem in America was justified in, among other places, the Book of Acts, and Eric Jansson, standing in Christ's place, would do work far exceeding that of Jesus Himself and His Apostles.[9]

Hälsingland, Sweden. Nineteenth century photograph of a typical farmstead of Jansson's day. Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

Alfta Parish Church. This parish lost at least one member of each household to the Janssonists. Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

To reiterate but to focus anew, Sweden in the 1840s found large masses of individuals who because of the great changes occurring around them had fallen from positions that had formerly provided them with personal security and self respect. As a consequence, they were forced more and more to rely upon their personal motivations, individual ambitions, and idealized visions of a collective life modeled after their own experience in the traditional folk community.

Jansson's ideology was at once that of an encapsulated group life which promised both the former collective security and new opportunities for personal advancement. He promised security to his followers both in terms of the familiar and that which was yearned for: the closed community with a dominating religion and the individualism of independent Bible reading and personal salvation and economic advancement. They would have it both ways: the comfort of the familiar and the enhanced self-worth of the individual.[10]

However, as the Janssonists were to find out, one of the basic problems that every ideal community, whether it be millenarian, or utopian, or pluralist, must resolve is that of the relationship between the individual member and the community itself. It is in the nature of community and its collective processes to develop imperatives that submerge the individual to the group. Herein lies the dilemma of Janssonism and every millennial or utopian society: how to accomplish the collective objective versus how to free the individual for maximum development of his/her personal objectives.

To think about this paradox, and to examine the assumptions and objectives of millennialism, is to uncover contradictions between the romantic vision and the realities of nature and values that awaited the Janssonists on the American frontier of the 1840s. On the frontier, the challenge of nature's resources and an egalitarian ethic released long dormant individualistic and competitive impulses. The real or imagined cohesion of communitarianism conjured out of European history was, itself, destabilized by individualism generated by economic opportunity, religious liberty, and civil justice. Although the millennialists had believed that their own small communities could achieve freedom and harmony simultaneously, the two ideals proved, on a small scale, to be incompatible.

Understanding these paradoxes provides valuable insight into the often-heard claim that utopias are inevitably failures because they are too impractical and idealistic. The demands of American society to establish equality, harmony, and institutional order proved too great for the medieval and peasant village forms. The destruction of the Janssonist utopia by individuals acting to achieve for themselves justice, freedom, and opportunity was not only necessary but also inevitable in the realization of the larger utopia. The community had not failed; it reconstructed itself on a larger scale, that of the American nation.

The farmhouse called "Linjo," owned by the Gabrielson family, where Jansson hid during his last night in Sweden. Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

NOTES

[1]For lengthy discussions of the development of Sweden into a modern nation, see Franklin D. Scott, *Sweden: The Nation's History* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1977) and Sten and Rosen Carlsson, *Svensk Historia,* 2 volumes (Stockholm: Svensk Bokforlaget/Bonniers, 1964).

[2]This paragraph and the following discussion rely heavily on George M. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects of Sweden Immigration* (Minneapolis: The University of Minnesota Press, 1932).

[3]See Tore Frangsmyr, "The Enlightenment in Sweden" in Roy Porter and Teich Mikulas, eds. *The Enlightenment in National Context* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981).

[4]In addition to Stevenson see Florence E. Janson, *The Background of Swedish Immigration 1840-1930* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1931), and Paul Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah: Eric Jansson of Bishop Hill* (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois University Press, 1976) for lengthy discussions of the dissenting movements of nineteenth Sweden.

[5]Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* pp. 7-8.

[6]Ibid, pp. 12-24.

[7]This doctrine of Perfectionism is identical to that which sanctified John Humphrey Noyes, the contemporary of Jansson but better-known New Englander, who founded Oneida in 1848 and who organized that community around the two principles of individual perfection and communalism. By improvement of one's spiritual state, character, and intellect through prayer and development of community through group criticism and education including, in the case of Oneida, complex marriage, a state of sinlessness could be achieved. Naturally, this perspective on both sides of the Atlantic led to persecution.

[8]For a discussion of millennial movements see Yonina Talmon, "Pursuit of the Millennium: The Relation Between Religious and Social Change," *The European Journal of Sociology, 2* (1962), 130-144. The dynamics of the secular utopian movement are identical to those of the millennial movement. See, for example, Keith Taylor, The Political Ideas of the Utopian Socialists (London: Frank Cass and Company, 1982).

[9]This is a paraphrase of Jansson's own modest catechism. See Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* p. 37

[10]Taylor, *Utopian Socialists* and Wayne Wheeler, and others, "Icarian Communism: A Preliminary Exploration in Historiography, Bibliography, and Social Theory," *International Review of Modern Sociology 6* (1976), 127-137.

THE ERIC-JANSSONISTS AND THE SHIFTING CONTOURS OF COMMUNITY

H. Arnold Barton

An impressive amount has been written about the Bishop Hill colony, surely more than about any other place associated with the great Swedish migration to America. Yet behind the colony, with its tree-shaded streets and weathered brick buildings, lay a community of a different nature with a history of its own that has never been systematically investigated throughout its entire life-span: the company of those in both the Old World and the New who accepted Eric Jansson as their prophet and embraced his creed.

It seems natural to regard the one community as synonymous with the other, and this indeed is the usual assumption. But closer examination reveals that this was far from the case. The composition of the company of the faithful, from the beginning of Eric Jansson's ministry in Sweden around 1840 down to the end of the century, was in constant flux.

Many who had at first flocked to hear Eric Jansson preach the new dispensation in the old farmsteads in Uppland and Hälsingland or who had crowded around the book-burnings at Alfta, Söderala, and Forsa were not prepared by 1846 to heed the prophet's call to depart for the Promised Land across the sea, although some continued to revere him and his teachings. Of those who did cross to the other shore, many left the sect before ever reaching the New Jerusalem on the Illinois prairie. Moveover, from its founding in 1846, there were repeated waves of defection from the Bishop Hill colony.

Yet the sect at the same time won new converts over at least a decade and a half. The emigration of Janssonists from Sweden continued for eight years or more, and some souls even seem to have been gained—at least for a time—elsewhere in Scandinavia and in America. After reaching its low point by the time of Eric Jansson's death in 1850, Bishop Hill's population doubled during the next eight years, before the onset of its long post-colony decline.

The publicity in Sweden surrounding the Janssonist sect and its colony at Bishop Hill, as well as the dispersal of former adherents, both during and after the colony period, to other localities in Illinois and beyond, are meanwhile universally recognized as factors of prime importance in the wider history of the great Swedish migration to this continent. Ulf Beijbom summarized a consensus when he called the Eric-Janssonists the "core" of the earlier emigration while the most recent authority on the Janssonist emigrants, Kjell Söderberg, has sought to demonstrate this concept in some detail. Yet there are still significant questions to be raised in this respect and new insights to be gained.[1]

It would be of great interest to know more about how, when, and why the definitive decision was made for the sect to leave the homeland and seek its future in America. People in the Janssonist districts of north-central Sweden had become aware of America and its potentialities through a number of sources by the early 1840s. Already by November 22, 1845, *Hudikswalls Weckoblad* reported that the Janssonists were talking of settling in the Mississippi Valley. Some three weeks later, on December 16, 1845, Olof Olsson arrived in New York to scout for a new home in America for his brethren in the faith. That same fall the first small group of Janssonists attempted to sail to America from Söderhamn but were shipwrecked near Öregrund and were forced to wait until the following year to emigrate. Eric Jansson's son, Captain Eric Johnson, later wrote that his father had prepared the entire plan for the emigration and colonization of the group in America, and had selected the leaders for this enterprise, before he himself secretly left Sweden in the winter of 1846. That spring Olof Olsson purchased the first land for the Janssonists in Henry County, Illinois.[2]

The reason traditionally given for the Janssonist emigration is the persecution the sect suffered in Sweden. Yet there is good reason to suspect another, no less significant, motive. The Swedish scholar Emil Herlenius expressed the view in 1900 that "Eric-Janssonism would probably have declined at that time [1846], since many had begun to regain their senses, had the idea of emigrating not combined religious enthusiasm with lust for adventure and the vision of a good land beyond the sea." A letter written by Eric Jansson at the time of his departure from Sweden in March 1846 makes angry allusions to the "hundreds" who had betrayed him. He beseeched that "all hypocrites be rooted out of God's holy congregation" and that "God make a way for all the upright, that [they] may either come to America or go to the heavenly world." This strongly suggests that the move to America was intended as an ordeal of faith to separate the true believers from the faint of heart and thereby to vindicate the prophet's authority over those who heeded the call.[3] The rapid radicalization of Eric Jansson's theology had doubtless caused many to have second thoughts. Seen in this light, the emigration was itself the first of the many splits within the Janssonist community which play so prominent a part in its history and which account in such large part for its overall significance for the early Swedish emigration.

The mass migration of the sect began with the departure of Eric Jansson, his family, and a few others via Christiana in Norway in the spring of 1846 and continued over the next eight years, to 1854. Eric Johnson claimed that there were at the outset some 1,100 of his father's followers who wished to join his new colony in America. Swedish clerical reports from 1846 indicate that around 1,030 persons emigrated that year from the Janssonist districts, mainly in Hälsingland, almost all of them undoubtedly Janssonists. This correlates quite closely with a careful reckoning by Carl Gustaf Blombergsson, the sect's printer, that 1,001 Janssonists arrived in New York between early June in 1846 and March 20, 1847. Others thereafter decided to take the great step when favorable reports reached them from Bishop Hill. Meanwhile proselytizing continued in Sweden for several years. By 1854, when the last organized group came over, the total Janssonist emigration probably totaled around 1,500, the figure most often given.[4]

It has been generally taken for granted that the Janssonist creed simply died out in Sweden with the Janssonist exodus to America. Yet not all of those who still remained faithful to the prophet left Sweden. Among them were one of the prophet's own brothers and certain others who had played noted roles in the movement. Some had set out but turned back for family or practical reasons. *Was* Janssonism altogether dead and buried in Sweden after the departure of the last organized group in 1854?

This hardly seems logical and there are at least a few tantalizing signs that it long lingered on in a kind of concealed underground existence in certain localities and households. "Down to our own day," Emil Herlenius wrote in 1900, "one or another member [of the sect] has lived on, who the whole time has preserved his faith in Eric Jansson that he was 'the great light sent by God.' " By that time there were few, if any, who still openly professed the Janssonist faith even in Bishop Hill itself. Meanwhile, two Janssonists who left the group in Copenhagen in 1846 made a number of converts among Danish Baptists in and around Vemmeløv Parish on Sjoelland (Zealand) to a Janssonist offshoot sect calling itself the "Congregation of Holy Brethren" (*De hellige Brødres forsamling or Den hellige Brødremenighed*), which moved as a group to Fredericia on Jutland in late 1847 but seems to have broken up not long after.[5] In 1848, a number of Janssonist converts were made in Norway.

One would like to know more about the twilight years of Eric-Janssonism in Sweden. I know that many oral traditions about the prophet and his following still live on in Hälsingland—my grandmother's native province—and it may well be imagined that living memory even today preserves some recollections about the last of the faithful in those parts. Perhaps the little band who kept the flame burning in Sweden were able to preserve a more sanctified memory of their prophet than those who had to face the harsh realities of the American Midwestern frontier with him.

Emil Herlenius held that the great majority of the Janssonists remaining in Sweden either returned (at least nominally) to the State Church or became members of other sects. It seems likely that those who turned to other forms of pietism may well have brought with them at least certain ideas from their former creed. Certainly this was assumed by members of the State Church clergy. A Lutheran pastor in Ljusdal, Hälsingland, complained in 1853 of how, "as in America," sects and factions strove to tear apart all religious unity in Sweden. In Hälsingland "Eric-Janssonism was followed by Hedbergianism, which appeared in more subtle and dangerous guise, with Luther's name on its shield."[6]

Bishop Hill was not the only, or even the first, Swedish settlement in America during the 1840s. Occasional individuals and even families had found their way across the Atlantic since colonial times. The first Swedish settlement in the Midwest was Gustaf Unonius' "New Upsala" at Pine Lake, Wisconsin, dating from 1841, which lasted only a few years. Peter Cassel led twenty-one friends and relatives from Kisa in Östergötland, joined by a few others along the way, to establish the first lasting Swedish settlement in the region, New Sweden in Jefferson County, Iowa, in 1845. Between 1846 and 1849, groups of emigrants from Östergötland and Småland heading for the Cassel colony or splitting off from it settled at Swede Point (now Madrid) and Borgholm (now Munterville)

in Iowa, and—most significantly in the present connection—around Andover in Henry County, Illinois, a few miles northwest of Bishop Hill.

Still, in 1846 the more than 1,000 Eric-Janssonist arrivals comprised by far the largest influx of Swedes into the United States and by the end of that year Bishop Hill was larger than any of the older settlements. Numerous letters from the colony described in glowing terms the blessings of the Promised Land. "I take now pen in hand, moved by the spirit of the Lord," one colonist wrote in 1847, "when I consider how God has blessed us here on this new soil by a hundredfold in both spiritual and worldly goods over what we possessed in our fatherland." The Janssonists, he claimed, had bought lands "that could not be exchanged for a quarter of all Sweden."[7]

These were words to be reckoned with in the old farmsteads and crofts back home. The "America-letters" were eagerly read to all who would listen, passed from hand to hand, copied and recopied, and frequently printed in local newspapers. It was widely assumed, and remains so today, that the Janssonist exodus precipitated the mass migration of Swedes to America beginning in the mid-nineteenth century. Vilhelm Moberg, who more than anyone else gave currency to the popular saga of the Great Swedish Migration, summarized this view when he maintained: "If there is anything that has given circulation to the Legend of America in Sweden, it must be these letters from Bishop Hill."[8]

Such a view, plausible as it may seem considering the timing of the mass emigration, is not to be accepted without critical examination. Many of the letters about Bishop Hill were written by disgruntled persons who had left it and who roundly condemned its conditions and leadership. Their letters were widely printed in Swedish newspapers opposed to emigration as a warning to others against making the same mistake. Some were no doubt deterred by such reports. Paul Elmen has expressed a certain skepticism regarding Bishop Hill's publicity value. "Had the Janssonists never left, the emigration would probably have continued just as it did, and in even larger numbers," he wrote in 1976. "All that one can say with confidence is that the Janssonists did publicize the American dream, and may have something to do with its acceptance in Sweden."[9]

Nonetheless, many of those who denounced Eric Jansson and his utopia wrote enthusiastically about the land they had come to. "It is truly a land of Canaan," one of them wrote in 1847 from nearby Victoria, Illinois, in a letter that was promptly printed in pamphlet form in Sweden, "where milk and honey flow for anyone who can and will work . . . Here there are no crop failures . . . The Americans [are] friendly in their manner and treat foreigners like friends and brothers." "Whoever is young and has money," another former colonist wrote, "can quickly acquire land without giving himself to Eric Jansson, and young people can find good earnings as well."[10] In the balance, it thus seems difficult to escape the conclusion that the letters from Eric Janssonists—both steadfast and apostate—played a central role in starting the "America fever" in mid-nineteenth-century Sweden.

Kjell Söderberg, who in 1981 brought out the most recent analysis of the Janssonist emigration, has, moreover, argued that the group migrations of Lutheran pietists led to northern Illinois by pastors Lars Paul Esbjörn (1849), T. N. Hasselquist (1852), and Erland Carlsson (1853), as well as of the Hedbergian

Jöns Andersson immigrated to Bishop Hill in 1853 and wrote to friends in Stålbo encouraging them to come to the colony. Courtesy of the Illinois Department of Conservation.

Lutherans from northern Hälsingland led by the farmer Joris Per Andersson in 1850 and the Baptists from Dalarna who a few years later settled in Isanti County, Minnesota, were all directly inspired by the Janssonist group migration. Young Eric Norelius, a member of Joris Per Andersson's group in 1850, recalled how "several other companies of emigrants sailed from Gävle during the summer, and they all were bound for Henry, Knox and Rock Island counties, Illinois, as this region was well known through the Eric Janssonists."[11]

In time, too, it would appear that the material appeal of the colony grew at the expense of the original religious mission. The Swedish Baptist missionary Anders Wiberg, who visited Bishop Hill in 1853, found that "the fanaticism which characterized the Erik Janssonists in Sweden seemed . . . to have disappeared to a great extent, and it was doubtless of great gain for the colony, in both a spiritual and a temporal sense, that Eric Jansson ended his days so suddenly [three years earlier]."[12] The colony was by then approaching the height of its considerable prosperity before it was ruined by the nationwide economic crisis of 1857.

If up to 1,500 of Eric Jansson's followers departed Sweden between 1846 and 1854, their numbers were reduced even before they reached New York. By one estimate, no less than 127 of them were the victims of shipwreck while others died of other causes either at sea or ashore en route to Bishop Hill.[13] By the end of 1846, some 400 Janssonists had reached their new home of whom perhaps a third may have died that winter. A large number who followed were forced to spend the winter in New York under the most miserable conditions before moving out to Bishop Hill the following spring. The sailor Johan Edvard Liljeholm recalled, "of about 520 people who had left their homes, enticed by the bright account of the promised land, and believing in Eric Jansson's false doctrine, no more than 400 remained, one third of whom were ill."[14]

The schisms that had commenced already before the first Janssonists left Sweden continued after they reached the further shore. Some disaffected members left the sect after arriving in New York. An evidently larger group— including one of the prophet's own brothers—defected in Chicago. A few found their way back to Sweden.[15]

It thus seems remarkable that some historians should imply at least that Bishop Hill's population was equal to the total Eric-Janssonist emigration.[16] Moreover, among the emigrants who got that far there were constant defections, causing the faithful to question the sincerity of many of those who had traveled to America and even had their debts paid for them in Sweden at the expense of the common fund. In an undated letter to Sweden, apparently from the 1850s, a Bishop Hill colonist complained:

> . . .it has gotten so that there are hundreds of people around this country whom we have both bought clothes for and paid their way all the way from Sweden, and some of them have stayed somewhere along the way and a lot of them have left us here. All of them have become our worst enemies and persecutors by spreading terrible lies, not only through letters to our home country but also here among the people of this country they have talked, the one more unreasonable than the other.[17]

Conditions in the colony were so hard during the first two years that by the fall of 1848 there was a mass exodus of between 200 and 300 of its members, encouraged—whether directly or indirectly—by the Swedish-born Methodist mis-

sionary Jonas Hedström in nearby Victoria, who had been appalled by their misery. Increasingly, in Paul Elmen's words, it would seem the colonists were coming to realize that "no single human act . . . could express in its simplicity the vision of purity which had captivated them in the farmhouses of Hälsingland." The following year, 1849, Bishop Hill was scourged by an epidemic of cholera which carried away some 200 of its members in part at least because the prophet, insisting upon the healing powers of unquestioning faith, obdurately refused until too late to call in medical help, which in turn proved incompetent.[18]

At its first peak, between mid-1847 and mid-1848, Bishop Hill's population probably amounted to close to 800 persons. In April 1850 the lawyer Britton A. Hill, who then represented the colony's interests, reported to the governor of Illinois that "the population of the colony is about 100 men, 250 women & girls, and 200 children." The female preponderance, not uncommon in utopian colonies, is notable. But this estimate was probably, already then, too great. The United States census of 1850—the year of Eric Jansson's death—counted no more than 406 inhabitants in November 18 of that year. Yet, only three years later, Anders Wiberg reported that the colonists numbered 700 and in 1856 Baron Axel Adelswärd spoke of a total of circa 800, which by then may have included a few in Bishop Hill's new satellite colony at Galva, which he also described. Lars Ljungmark is doubtlessly correct in claiming that Bishop Hill's population never exceeded this figure.[19] Following the economic collapse of 1857 its population steadily dwindled. After the formal incorporation of the colony in 1853, not all of Bishop Hill's residents joined initially or, in some cases, ever. In 1858 actual membership totaled 645, of which 147 were males and 258 females over twenty years of age. The United States census shows 420 residents in 1860 and 200 in 1870. By 1875, Charles Nordhoff, the pioneer chronicler of American utopian colonies, found Bishop Hill "slowly falling into decay." In 1892, Michael A. Mikkelsen reported that the village had 333 inhabitants.[20] Its present population is around 175.

Considering the constant defections, it seems remarkable that the Colony's population actually increased from 406 in 1850 to around 800 by 1856, that is, by nearly 100 percent if the latter figure is trustworthy. This calls for at least some explanation. One group of about 100 persons arrived in Bishop Hill from Sweden in December 1850, following the census of that year, after having lost fifty to sixty of its members from cholera on the way. A final organized party of some seventy persons arrived from Sweden in late 1854.[21] Some earlier defectors doubtless rejoined the colony. Both during and after the colony period, individual immigrants from the homeland came to join relatives and friends from home at Bishop Hill.[22] Despite its experiments in celibacy during its first two years and again after 1854, many children were born in the community.

Moreover, Janssonism won some converts en route and in America, including some notable figures in Bishop Hill's history. Sophie Pollock, who in 1849 became Eric Jansson's second wife, while born in Gothenburg, had long been living in New York when the prophet, passing through in 1846, won her for the faith. F. U. Norberg, the stormy petrel of the colony who eventually brought suit for its dissolution, had been in America since 1842 and came to Bishop Hill evidently in 1847. Victor Witting, later one of the leaders of Swedish Methodism, was

a sailor on ships carrying Janssonists to America before joining the colony for a time in 1847. Rag-tag adventurers of Swedish origin but questionable credentials for a Godly community occasionally passed through, including John Rooth, Eric Jansson's future murderer, who first showed up with some of his cronies in 1847. By the prosperous middle 1850s, the colony had become more liberal toward those not of its own persuasion. Baron Axel Adelswärd noted in 1856 that the colonists were "very good to other poor Swedes who come to them. If they wish they may join them, but if not they may stay with them for some time and are fed and housed free."[23] It is not unlikely that some did elect to remain.

Janssonism was Swedish in fact but universal in theory. C. G. Blombergsson claimed that Eric Jansson, during his brief stay in New York in 1846, made a number of converts including some who could not understand a word of Swedish but were impressed by his conviction and manner. Once at Bishop Hill, the prophet began training a select group, the "Twelve Apostles," to carry the Word throughout the world.[24]

In 1847, Cleng Peerson, the celebrated "Pathfinder" of the Norwegian immigration since the 1820s, now a man of sixty-five years, joined the colony, sold his property in Missouri for the benefit of the common fund, and took a Swedish wife. The marriage seems to have turned sour, however, and Peerson departed for the Norwegian Fox River settlement in La Salle County in 1849, leaving his young wife at Bishop Hill.[25] In the latter year, meanwhile, Jonas Nylund from Hälsingland led a sizable party to Bishop Hill, consisting mainly of converts he had made in Norway. Cholera broke out by the time they reached La Salle, which they then brought to Bishop Hill, setting off the disastrous epidemic of that year. According to the Lutheran pastor and historian Eric Norelius in 1890, the surviving Norwegians seem to have moved on to Mission Point on the Fox River and most of them later became Mormons. Eric Johnson claimed, however, that three of them stayed on in Bishop Hill.[26]

Despite their valiant attempts to learn English—after finding to their dismay upon arriving in America that they did not possess the gift of tongues—the "Twelve Apostles" met with scant success in their efforts to convert the unredeemed, with one possible exception. Indeed, little seems to be known about their labors except in the case of the tailor Nils Hedin, who visited the Rappists in Economy, Pennsylvania, the Oneida colony in New York state, and Hopedale in Massachusetts. He is even reputed to have persuaded twenty-five or thirty persons in Hopedale to move to Bishop Hill. Eric Johnson wrote that Hedin recruited "a number of persons" from a religious utopian colony in Massachusetts. Hedin paid for their transportation to Bishop Hill, where they were hospitably received. But when the desired amalgamation failed to work out, the colony paid their return fare to the East as well as compensation for the work they had done. There was much contact with the Shakers at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky.[27] At any event, the United States census of 1850 shows a single American family named Hinton from Tennessee and the German-born bricklayer August Bandholtz living in Bishop Hill. In 1860 the census reveals only Swedish-born residents and their Illinois-born children. Neither of these censuses can, however, be considered entirely reliable.[28] Only with the census of 1870, nearly a decade after the dissolution of the colony, does any influx of non-Swedes become apparent.

Olof Andersson Nordström immigrant from Nora, Sweden, who arrived at Bishop Hill in January 1855. Courtesy of the Illinois Department of Conservation.

Paul Elmen has pointed to the Janssonists' unresolved dilemma of seeking "to achieve a monastic exclusiveness and separation and, at the same time, launch a furious effort to transform and penetrate the world."[29] The possible conversion to Janssonism and residence at Bishop Hill—real or alleged—of non-Swedes remains one of the obscurest yet most tantalizing aspects of the colony's history. Clearly there was much coming and going at Bishop Hill during the colony period and the community seems to have been surprisingly open to outsiders. The story of its relations with non-Swedish Americans deserves further research.

It has meanwhile been repeatedly alleged that Bishop Hill was the mother hive to numerous daughter colonies both near and far. "In various parts of the west," Olov Isaksson has written, "settlements arose, populated by ex-colonists."[30] Such new centers of Swedish settlement would naturally have attracted other Swedish immigrants to their respective areas. Where, specifically, did members—or most frequently ex-members—of Eric Jansson's sect settle outside of their Utopia, and under what circumstances?

A special case, previously noted, was that of the defecting Janssonists who remained in Chicago, beginning in 1846. Although they did not really comprise a "daughter colony" of Bishop Hill, since they had never lived there, they constituted for a time a little "colony" of their own because most of the twenty-seven persons who left the Janssonists in Chicago that first year lived to begin with in a house on Illinois Street between Dearborn and State. They were the first sizable group of Swedes to settle in the city. Gustaf Unonius, now ordained as an Episcopal priest, first visited Chicago in 1848 and began his ministry there the following year. He found that the former Janssonists, who had been compelled to relinquish their worldly goods to the sect, had been "left almost naked and starving in a strange land." They provided much of the original membership of his St. Ansgarius church. In time other defectors drifted back to Chicago from Bishop Hill. Together with those few of their countrymen who had preceded them, ex-Janssonists formed the nucleus of what would soon become America's Swedish metropolis above all others.[31]

The largest mass exodus out of the colony took place in the fall of 1848, as seen. Between 200 and 300 persons left at that time, defying anathema and despite the forfeiture of their goods. Most went first to Victoria in Knox County which quickly became a predominantly Swedish community and the stronghold of embittered anti-Janssonism.[32] Before long increasing numbers settled in other nearby communities, such as Kewanee, Woodhull, and Alpha in Henry County; Galesburg, Henderson Grove, Wataga, Oneida, and Altona in Knox County; La Fayette and Toulon in Stark County; and in Rock Island and Moline. Carolyn Wilson has found evidence that a group of Bishop Hill colonists became Baptists and moved to Galesburg around 1857, where they briefly published a Baptist newspaper, *Frihetsvännen,* followed in 1858 by *Evangelisten*, edited by the former Janssonist Svante Cronsioe. This group seems to have at least considered moving to Red Oak, Iowa.

From the later 1860s, these break-away groups were joined by increasing numbers from Bishop Hill following the dissolution of the Colony and the economic problems this caused many of its former members. The life and career of Olof Krans is instructive in this regard: although celebrated as the painter

of Bishop Hill colony life and the portraitist of its pioneers, he spent most of his life living and working as a house painter in Galesburg and Altona.[33]

Galva, a few miles to the southeast, was meanwhile a "daughter colony" of Bishop Hill in the fullest sense. The town was platted by two American entrepreneurs in 1854, whereupon the Bishop Hill colony immediately purchased a block of fifty lots. This gave them so predominant an interest in the enterprise that they were able to name the new town Gefle, after the northern Swedish seaport from which so many of them had sailed, which was soon corrupted into Galva. Here the colony built a large warehouse for the shipment of its products on the newly constructed Chicago, Burlington and Quincy Railroad, followed by a pork packing house, a general merchandise business, a bank, and one of the earliest Swedish-American newspapers, Svante Cronsioe's *Den Swenske Republikanen*. A number of Bishop Hill colonists lived here after 1854, or later moved here.[34] Another outpost was the village of Nekoma in Henry County, a few miles southwest of Bishop Hill, established by the colony in 1854 in anticipation of a rail line that did not then materialize.[35]

By the later 1860s, land prices had risen to high levels while the disastrous crop failures in Sweden between 1867 and 1869 brought a flood of new immigrants to the existing Swedish communities in the area. This set off what George M. Stephenson has aptly called the "swarming of the Swedes" out of Illinois to new areas of settlement, involving numbers of former Bishop Hill settlers, both from Bishop Hill itself and from other Illinois communities.[36]

By this time, some former colonists had already left Illinois in search of greener pastures. In 1850, Jonas Olsson had led a party of eight gold-seekers to California in an effort to bolster the colony's sagging economy. While all returned, except for a man named Stålberg who stayed and C. G. Blombergsson who died there, the venture may well have caught the imagination of other Illinois Swedes, encouraging them to go out to California.[37] That same year, E.U. Norberg, one of the more controversial and intermittent members of the colony, took the lead, together with Gustaf Unonius, in promoting the first Swedish settlement at Chisago Lake in Minnesota. Although Norberg soon returned to Illinois, where he spent his last years near Toulon, this circumstance has apparently given rise to the frequent claim that a number of Bishop Hill people were among the early settlers in that area. The evidence of Eric Norelius, who knew the community well and gave a detailed listing of Chicago Lake's Swedish pioneers during the first five years of its settlement seems, however, to disprove this commonly held idea.[38]

In 1848, Anders Blomberg, a tailor from Orsa in Dalarna, together with another Janssonist missionary visited the Shaker colony at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky. He was impressed that the Shakers professed a perfectionist doctrine similar to the Janssonists'. Returning to Bishop Hill he urged strict celibacy on the Shaker model—an experiment that had just been abandoned, at least for the next six years, by the Janssonists. When this was rejected, Blomberg left Bishop Hill and joined the Shakers. He was followed around 1854 by ten others from Bishop Hill, including Eric Jansson's widow, Sophie, and son, Eric. The sequel is that Anders Blomberg visited Sweden as a Shaker missionary in 1866-67, resulting in the emigration of sixty-three persons from Älvdalen in northern Dalarna in

1868, most of whom went to Pleasant Hill. Here the Swedes lived together in the West Family House, forming a little colony within the colony. In the 1870s, Charles Nordhoff noted that while most of the Pleasant Hill Shakers were Americans, there were also "a good many Swedes."[39]

The large-scale movement of Swedes out of their older areas of settlement in northern Illinois, mainly to the west, beginning in the later 1860s after the break-up of the Bishop Hill colony, certainly involved an indeterminable number of former colonists who as individuals or single families joined larger groups of Swedish land-seekers without Bishop Hill connections. In such cases they are difficult, if not impossible, to trace.

There were at least a couple of instances, however, of organized Bishop Hill ventures for colonization further west. In 1869 Major Eric Forsse (originally Fors), a Bishop Hill colonist who during the Civil War had raised and commanded Company D of the 57th Illinois Volunteer Infantry Regiment, composed of Bishop Hill and Galva Swedes, led some fifty persons from those communities, among them several fellow veterans from Company D, to Saline County, Kansas, where they founded the Falun settlement. A few Swedes, possibly from Bishop Hill, seem to have arrived there already the year before.[40]

In a letter from Chicago, Anders Larsson, who had there defected from the Janssonists in 1846, wrote June 1873 to Sweden that "quite a number of families" were then planning to leave Bishop Hill to establish a new Swedish settlement in Kansas, where Captain Eric Johnson had arranged for the purchase of 100,000 acres. Conditions were believed to be much more favorable there than in Illinois. The outcome of this venture remains obscure. Eric Johnson, by his own account, attempted to establish a Swedish settlement at White City, Morris County, Kansas, which was frustrated by a plague of grasshoppers. He thereafter returned to Illinois where he and C. F. Peterson wrote the history of the Swedes in that state, including his narrative of the Bishop Hill colony, upon which all others have been in large part based. Still, the census of 1910 showed 641 persons of first- and second-generation Swedish stock living in Morris County—a respectable number. Very likely some Bishop Hill people settled there around 1873, while others may have moved on, possibly to the Falun settlement.[41]

A privately published family history tells how in 1880 Olof Saline found land for his own and at least four other Bishop Hill families near Minden, Nebraska. Persons in or near Bishop Hill told me in the spring of 1989 of people from the community who had settled around Holdredge and Broken Bow, Nebraska, and Clay Center, Kansas. Preserved necrologies of the colonists and their descendants from between 1899 and 1919, showing places of death, mention these and nearby localities and also seem to show minor concentrations in such places as Madrid, Iowa, and Cedar (Cedar Vale), Kansas. A wide dispersal is likewise indicated, especially in the Plains states, by the domiciles of former colonists and their children from states other than Illinois who attended the first Old Settlers' Day in Bishop Hill in 1896 and the centennial celebration of 1946. Already in 1896 the roster makes it clear that individuals with Bishop Hill connections were living throughout the United States.[42]

It is important to remember that those who moved on were not *only* Eric Janssonists and Bishop Hill colonists for longer or shorter periods. They had

relatives, friends, and acquaintances in their old home parishes in Sweden and in other Swedish settlements in America. Wherever they relocated, they tended to draw others after them. In time, the newer settlements had offshoots of their own, some of which by the end of the century may have been in the Canadian prairie provinces, making the development truly North American in scope.

One may wonder whether Bishop Hill folk retained a certain preference for close-knit communities of their own, even when they resettled among other Swedes. There would appear to be signs of this. Those who moved from Bishop Hill to other northwestern Illinois localities did tend to concentrate in the communities already mentioned, which lay mainly to the south and east of Bishop Hill, and not in others. The equally Swedish area of settlement to the north and west, including such places as Andover, Lynn Center, Swedona, Opheim, and Orion derived its Swedish population principally from Småland and Östergötland.[43] One thinks, too, of Bishop Hill's colonies in Kansas and Nebraska, to say nothing of the little group at Pleasant Hill, Kentucky.

Too much should not be made of this point, perhaps, since both Swedes and other immigrants tended as a whole to settle, if possible, with others from their own province, parish, or even village within a parish, and above all with their own kin. This is well demonstrated in the case of the Swedes.[44]

Yet a strong communal sense among the Bishop Hill people cannot be overlooked. They came from parts of Sweden where ancient traditions of the *byalag*, or closely integrated village community, were still a powerful social force at the time of their emigration. This ethic was strongly fortified by a common faith and strictly regulated communal way of life in the Bishop Hill Colony. Here the old ways long survived its formal dissolution. Most of the colonists who stayed on there continued to live in the communal buildings. In 1924, Anna Söderblom, wife of Sweden's archbishop, found two of them still living, including a ninety-four-year-old woman who preserved intact the dress, manner, and speech of her native Alfta parish in Hälsingland. "It seems hard to leave their old home," Anders Larsson wrote in 1873 of those then preparing to move to Kansas.[45]

It was no doubt harder for them than for most since their particular religious dogmas had exposed them to both official and popular persecution in Sweden and no little hostility from old Americans and fellow Swedish Americans alike. Under such circumstances it was natural that those who had kept the faith should be suspicious and mistrustful toward the outside world, not least as those who felt they had been duped by Eric Jansson sought to rehabilitate themselves by roundly condemning the sect. Michael A. Mikkelsen, in the early 1890s, found the old colonists notably reticent in speaking of the past, which he attributed to embarrassment over revealing the seeming "absurdities" of their former sect. In the early 1870s, Charles Nordhoff, after visiting Bishop Hill, reputedly muttered, "D--- these people; I can't get anything out of them!"[46]

Even with the fading away of the Janssonist creed the former colonists tended to remain apart from the Swedish-American mainstream. The Janssonist doctrine of spiritual perfectionism showed a marked similarity to Methodism, and indeed some leading Janssonists, such as Jonas Olsson, seem to have had some contact with Methodism before leaving Sweden. When the Lutheran immigrant Trued Granville Pearsson from Skåne visited Bishop Hill in the mid 1850s and

sought to prove to some of the colonists that, in fact, "they were Methodists, that they invoked the same Biblical passages and used the same reasoning as the Methodists," he received the reply, "Is that so, have they already learned so much from us?" Perhaps there was at least some element of truth in this, for the Lutheran pastor, Lars Paul Esbjörn in Andover wrote in 1850 of the Methodist missionary Jonas Hedström in Victoria that he often preached "the same as Jansson," in contrast to more orthodox Wesleyan Methodists.[47]

It was thus a relatively short step for Eric Janssonists to become Methodists. Jonas Olsson's brother Olof, the sect's land-seeking scout in Illinois, turned Methodist already in 1846 as did most of those who left Bishop Hill for Victoria and its environs in following years. A Methodist congregation was established in Bishop Hill itself by 1864 and it eventually came to include many of the old colonists.[48]

Moreover, to leave Bishop Hill, or even to affiliate formally with another denomination, need not have meant renunciation of basic tenets of the Janssonist creed. Those who left, perhaps especially after the prophet's death in 1850, seem to have done so more from dissatisfaction with the practical leadership of the colony reather than doctrinal considerations per se. Gustaf Unonius, upon preaching in Galesburg in the 1850s, encountered a group of Janssonists who engaged him so hotly in doctrinal dispute that they pursued him shouting into the street. Very likely they were residents of Galesburg. L. P. Esbjörn wrote, already in May 1850—the month of Eric Jansson's death—that most of the Swedes in Galesburg had been Janssonists who, although they had left their prophet and his colony, were still "filled with his false doctrine of sinless perfection." To another correspondent he wrote that same year that many in his area, "especially in Galesburg," who had left Bishop Hill, were still "Janssonists in their hearts."[49]

Still, Janssonism had developed within the framework of Hälsingland Devotionalism with its stress upon the individual search for truth and salvation. Vilhelm Moberg, in studying the letters of Bishop Hill colonists, was impressed with how literate and articulate they were in comparison to the overall cultural level of the Swedish peasantry in the mid-nineteenth century.[50] Not surprisingly, then, many of the stronger spirits among them would clearly pursue their own independent spiritual pilgrimages throughout their lives. Some of the more ardent former Janssonists in Bishop Hill itself were attracted to Second Adventism, or in some cases Swedenborgianism. Some joined the Mission Covenant Church. Many remained outside of any formal denomination. Bishop Hill people who settled around Falun, Kansas, beginning in 1869, organized a non-denominational Free Christian Association, where representatives of various Christian creeds were allowed to preach. Few former Janssonists, however, ever returned to the Lutheran fold, from which they had once suffered such unrelenting persecution.[51]

If those who had followed Eric Jansson in the old land and the new had something of a siege mentality toward the outside world their colony at Bishop Hill did not exist long enough ever to become a fully integrated community, and this surely had much to do with their diaspora beyond its confines. The Janssonists, while unified through faith, came originally from scattered localities in north-central Sweden with marked differences of material conditions, tradi-

tions, and dialects, at a time when peasant loyalties were still basically to locality and kin. From the beginning, colonists from different provinces lived and ate apart in the first primative dugouts. It has been shown for example, that a sizable group from Nora parish in Uppland, most of them relatively late arrivals, tended to associate, work, and intermarry with their own kind.[52]

Local differences surfaced in rivalries over power and influence within the colony. Although Eric Jansson was himself from Uppland his main base of support had been in Hälsingland and most of his trusted lieutenants were from that province, most notably from Söderala, which gave rise to jealousies and frictions. "God save us from Hälsinglanders!" one of the early Chicago defectors exclaimed in exasperation.[53] After the murder of Jansson in May 1850, his widow, Sophie, declared Anders Berglund from Alfta titular head of the colony until the prophet's son should become of age. But upon returning from the California goldfields in February 1851, Jonas Olsson rallied enough support to repudiate any claim to a hereditary succession and quickly gained the leadership. Of the colony's seven trustees under its charter of 1853, five including Olsson were from Söderala. Naturally, the "Söderala Five," as they were called, had to bear the blame when the colony failed financially after 1857. In the post-colony period, interestingly enough, Anders Berglund became a lay preacher to the Methodist faction, while Jonas Olsson preached to a dwindling Janssonist flock in the old Colony church until he became a Second Adventist around 1870.[54]

These cleavages within Bishop Hill surely affected movement out of the colony. Eric Johnson noted that those who had stayed behind in Chicago in 1846 were "all from Västmanland." It has been observed that when colonists from Nora departed they tended to settle together in the same places. The Bishop Hill people who went to Saline County, Kansas, seem to have been largely from Dalarna, as reflected by their naming their settlement Falun, after its provincial capital.[55] It would indeed seem surprising if detailed analysis of surviving biographical data did not bear out that, following the colony episode, the old ties of province, parish, and kinship did not reassert themselves among Eric Jansson's followers as they renewed their pilgrimage in search of new earthly abodes.

In a longer perspective, the Eric Janssonists accounted for only a tiny fraction of the one-and-a-quarter million Swedish immigrants who ultimately came to America and Bishop Hill was only one among their numerous settlements, large and small, across the continent. Yet the story of this visionary band and their utopia on the Illinois prairie is a thought-provoking reminder that mere numbers cannot be taken as the sole measure of historic significance.

Original colony building in 1969 before restoration.

NOTES

[1]Ulf Beijbom, *Amerika, Amerika. En bok om utvandringen* (Stockholm: Natur och Kultur, 1977), p. 45; Kjell Söderberg, *Den första massutvandringen. En studie av befolkningsrörlighet och emigration utgående från Alfta socken i Hälsingland 1846-1895*, Acta Universitatis Umensis, 39 (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell International, 1981). In addition to Söderberg, Charles H. Nelson has analyzed the socio-economic background of the Janssonist emigrants in "Toward a More Accurate Approximation of the Class Composition of the Erik Janssonists," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly,* (hereafter *SPHQ*) 26 (1975), 3-15. For printed sources on the Eric-Janssonists and Bishop Hill, see E. Gustav Johnson, "A Selected Bibliography of Bishop Hill Literature," *SPHQ*, 15 (1964), 109-22, and "Bishop Hill Bibliography: Additional Entries," *Ibid.*, 16 (1965), 26-30.

[2]The best discussion of the background to the Janssonist emigration is in Paul Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah: Eric Jansson of Bishop Hill* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1976), pp. 111-14, 117. See also John Norton, "Parson Baird, Bishop Hill, and Manifest Destiny," *SPHQ,* 23 (1972), 151-68; Wesley M. Westerberg, "Bethel Ship to Bishop Hill: Document (Letter of Olof Olsson)," *Ibid.*, 23 (1972), 55-70; Michael A. Mikkelsen, *The Bishop Hill Colony: A Religious Communistic Settlement in Henry County, Illinois, Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science,* 10:1 (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins Press, 1892), pp. 11-14; Eric Johnson and C.F. Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois. Historiska anteckningar* (Chicago: W. Williamson, 1880), pp. 26-28.

[3]Emil Herlenius, *Erik-Jansismens historia. Ett bidrag till kännedom om det svenska sektväsendet* (Jonkoping, 1900), p. 59; Alan Swanson, "Erik Jansson's 'Ski Letter,' " *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* (hereafter *SAHQ*), 35 (1984), 338-45; Alan Swanson, "The Road to Perfection," *Scandinavian Studies,* 60 (1988), 438-39. For the overall significance of deliberate ordeals of faith as sectarian "commitment mechanisms," see Rosabeth M. Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1972), chs. 3-4.

[4]Florence E. Janson, *The Background of Swedish Immigration, 1840-1930* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1931), pp. 181-82; Beijbom, *Amerika,* p. 123; Lars Ljungmark, *Swedish Exodus* (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1979), p. 20; Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* p. 109, 197nl; Ernst W. Olson, et al., *History of the Swedes of Illinois,* 2 vols. (Chicago: Engberg-Holmberg Publishing Co., 1908), I, p. 228; Erik Wikén, "New Light on the Erik Janssonist' Emigration," *SAHQ,* 35 (1984), 221-24, and errata, *Ibid.*, 36 (1985), 68-69. For passenger lists for the ships involved and many biographical details, see Nils William Olsson, *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in New York, 1820-1850* Chicago: Swedish Pioneer Historical Society, 1967) (hereafter *SPANY*) and *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in U.S. Ports (Except New York), 1820-1850* (Stockholm: Kungliga Biblioteket, 1979) (hereafter *SPANUS*).

[5]Herlenius, *Erik Jansismens historia,* pp. 68-69.

[6]Gunnar Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan. Brev från och till svenskar i Amerika 1849-1892 (Stockholm:* Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokforlag, 1932), p. 67.

[7]Albin Widén, *När Svensk-Amerika grundades* (n.p.: Vasa Orden av Amerika, n.d. [1961]), p. 21; Cf. H. Arnold Barton, *Letters from the Promised Land: Swedes in America, 1840-1914* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), pp. 38-39.

[8]Vilhelm Moberg, *The Unknown Swedes: A Book about Swedes in America, Past and Present,* trans. and ed. Roger McKnight (Carbondale, Ill.: Southern Illinois University Press, 1988), p. 24. The Swedish original is *Den okända släkten* (2nd. ed., Stockholm: PAN/Norstedts, 1968), p. 24.

[9]Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* p. 174.

[10]Albin Widén, *Amerikaemigrationen i dokument* (Stockholm: Prisma, 1966), pp. 26-28. Gun Andersson, "An America-Letter to Alfta in 1847: Who Wrote It?" *SPHQ,* 31 (1980), 321-41, Moberg, *Unknown Swedes,* pp. 24, 29 (*Okända släkten,* 24-29).

[11]Söderberg, 204-15; (Eric Norelius,) *Early Life of Eric Norelius (1833-1862), A Lutheran Pioneer,* trans. Emeroy Johnson (Rock Island, Ill.: Augustana Book Concern, 1934), p. 98.

[12]John Norton, trans. and ed., "Anders Wiberg's Account of a Trip to the United States in 1852-1853," *SPHQ,* 29 (1978), 105. Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois,* 46.

[13]Jansson, *Swedish Immigration,* p. 127.

[14]Johan Edvard Liljeholm, *Detta förlovade land. Resa i Amerika 1846-1850,* ed. Olov Isaksson (Stockholm: LT:s förlag, 1981), pp. 40-41.

[15]Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* pp. 121-22.

[16]See, for example, Jansson, *Swedish Immigration,* p. 127.

[17]Widén, *Amerikaemigrationen,* p. 60; Barton, *Letters,* p. 83; Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois,* p. 28.

[18]Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois,* pp. 34-35. Olson, et al., *History of the Swedes of Illinois,* I, p. 234; Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* pp. 142-44; N. M. Liljegren, N. O. Westergreen, and C. G. Wallenius, *Svenska Metodismen i Amerika* (Chicago: Svenska M. E. Bokhandels-Föreningens Förlag, 1895), pp. 168-69.

[19]Henry E. Pratt, ed., "The Murder of Eric Jansson, Leader of the Bishop Hill Colony," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society,* 45 (1952), 64; Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* pp. 117, 148; Norton, "Wiberg's Account," 104; Barton, *Letters,* p. 81; Ljungmark, *Swedish Exodus,* p. 20.

[20]Philip J. Stoneberg in Henry L. Kiner, *History of Henry County, Illinois,* 2 vols. (Chicago: Pioneer Publ. Co., 1910), pp. 641-42, 645; Charles Nordhoff, *The Communistic Societies of the United States* (New York: Schocken Books, 1965), p. 348; Mikkelsen, *Bishop Hill Colony,* p. 71.

[21]Eric Norelius, *De svenska luterska församlingarnas och svenskarnes historia i Amerika,* 2 vols. (Rock Island, Ill.: Lutheran Augustana Book Concern), I, pp. 29-30.

[22]In 1962, Folke Hedblom met Swedish immigrants who had arrived in Bishop Hill as late as 1901. See his "Hos hälsingar i Bishop Hill. Från en Amerika-resa 1962," in *Hälsingerunor. En hembygdsbok 1963* (Bollnäs, 1963), pp. 17, 18.

[23]Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* pp. 103-4, 120, 138-39, 202-3; Olson, et al., *History of the Swedes,* I, pp. 269-70; Barton *Letters,* p. 81.

[24]Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* pp. 132-33.

[25]Theodore C. Blegen, "Cleng Peerson and Norwegian Immigration," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review,* 7 (1921), 323. A somewhat imaginative account is Hjalmar R. Holand, *De norske Settlementers Historie* (Ephraim, Wis., 1908), pp. 96-97.

[26]Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois,* p. 37; Norelius, *De svenska luterska,* I, p. 29; Olson, et al., *History of the Swedes,* p. 227. No persons of Norwegian birth show up in either the 1850 or 1860 U.S. censuses for Bishop Hill, but in unpublished studies Carolyn Wilson of Minneapolis and Roy Ostrom of Williamsfield, Illinois, have criticized the 1850 and 1860 censuses, respectively, for being demonstrably incomplete. Mr. Ostrom remembers of hearing of one "Norsk Ole" in Bishop Hill and his unpublished listing of necrologies of former colonists includes the Norwegian-born Ole Anderson who died in 1901.

[27]Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois,* p. 47; Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* pp. 132-34; Olov Isaksson and Sören Hallgren, *Bishop Hill: A Utopia on the Prairie* (Stockholm: LT:s förlag, 1969), p. 94.

[28]See note 25, above.

[29]Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* p. 133.

[30]Isaksson & Hallgren, *Bishop Hill,* p. 146; Cf. 153. This point is strongly stressed in Söderberg, *Den första massutvandringen,* pp. 208, 217; see also 206 (map).

[31]Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois,* p. 234; Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* pp. 121-22, 148-49; Ulf Beijbom, *Swedes in Chicago: A Demographic and Social Study of the 1846-1880 Immigration,* Studia Historica Upsaliensia, 38 (Uppsala: Läromedelsförlagen, 1971), pp. 44-45; (Gustaf Unonius,) *A Pioneer in Northwest America, 1841-1858: The Memoirs of Gustaf Unonius,* trans. Jonas Oscar Backlund, ed. Nils William Olsson, 2 vols. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1950, 1960), II, pp. 166-67.

[32]Norelius, *De svenska lutnerska*, I, P. 75; Liljegren, et al., *Svenska Methodismen*, pp. 168-69.

[33]See Johnson & Peterson and Olson, et al., 1, *Svenskarne i Illinois*, and Olson, etal., *History of the Swedes*, for details on early Swedish settlers in these communities, identifying these who came from Bishop Hill. Part of Johnson & Peterson has been translated by Leroy Williamson as *The Swedes in Knox County, Illinois* (Galesburg, Ill.: Knox County Genealogical Society, 1979). Conversation with Carolyn A. Wilson, February 1989; J. Oscar Backlund, *A Century of the Swedish American Press* (Chicago: Swedish American Newspaper Co., 1952), pp. 21-22. Söderberg, *Den forsta massutvandringen* 200-3, emphasizes above-average rates of emigration from the former "Janssonist" parishes in Sweden down to the end of the 19th century. George Swank, *Painter Krans: OK of Bishop Hill Colony* (Galva, Ill.: Galvaland Press, 1976).

[34]Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois*, pp. 64-68; Olson, et al., I, *History of the Swedes*, pp. 337-40; *The History of Henry County, Illinois* (Chicago: H. F. Kett & Co., 1877), pp. 168-70. Barton, *Letters*, pp. 79, 81.

[35]Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois*, pp. 62-63; Kiner, *History of Henry County, Ill.*, pp. 620-21.

[36]George M. Stephenson, *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1932), title to Ch. 21.

[37]See Isaksson & Hallgren, *Bishop Hill*, pp. 155-61; Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois*, p. 39.

[38]Emeroy Johnson, "Early History of Chicago Lake Re-examined," *SAHQ*, 39 (1988), 215-25; Norelius, *De Svenska Luterska*, 1, pp. 541-42, 554-58.

[39]Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah*, pp. 133-34, 168, 200n45; Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois*, p. 47; Olson, et al., *History of the Swedes*, I, pp. 250-51; Olsson, *SPANUS*, 95; E. Gustav Johnson, "A Scholarly Testament," *SPHQ*, 25 (1975): 125-26; Nordhoff, *Communistic Societies*, p. 212.

[40]DeVere E. Blomberg, ed., *Heart and Heritage: Centennial Reflections—Falun Lutheran Church and Community, 1887-1987 (Ellsworth, Kan: Ellsworth Printing Co., 1987) pp. 2, 58; Otto Robert Landelius, Swedish Place-Names in North America*, trans. Kain Franzén, ed. Raymond Jarvi (Carbondale, Ill: Southern Illinois University Press, 1985), p. 73. Conversation with Ronald E. Nelson, Bishop Hill, and John Norton, Moline, Ill., Jan., 1989.

[41]Widén, *Nar Svensk-Amerika grundades*, p. 118; Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois*, pp. 297-98; Helge Nelson, *The Swedes and the Swedish Settlements in North America*, 2 vols. (Lund: Gleerups, 1943), I, p. 271, and II, map 55.

[42]Minnie C. Norlin, *Karin* (n. p., 1936), p. 45. (This rare source was lent to me by Linda Holden, Bishop Hill.) Conversations with Ronald E. Nelson and Rias Spet, Bishop Hill, and Lowell E. Bjorling, Altona, Ill. For attendance at the 1896 and 1946 celebrations, see Theo. J. Anderson, ed., *100 Years: A History of Bishop Hill, Illinois* (Chicago: no publ., 1946), esp. pp. 200-1, 235, 245-47. The necrologies have been compiled by Roy Ostrom, Williamsfield, Ill.

[43]Nelson, *Swedes and Swedish Settlements*, I, p. 166.

[44]See, for ex., Robert C. Ostergren, *A Community Transplanted: The Trans-Atlantic Experiences of a Swedish Immigrant Settlement in the Upper Middle West, 1835-1915* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1988).

[45]Anna Soderblom, *En Amerikabok* (Stockholm: Svenska kyrkans diakonistyrelses bokforlag, 1925), pp. 196-97; Widen, *Nar Svensk-Amerika grundades*, p. 118.

[46]Mikkelsen, *Bishop Hill Colony*, pp. 6-7.

[47]Arvid Bjerking, ed., *En skansk banbrytare i Amerika. Trued Granville Pearsons självbiografi* (Oskarshamn: AB Axel Melchiors Bokhandel, 1937), p. 56; Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, p. 43. Cf. Norelius, *De svenska Luterska*, I, p. 154; Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois*, p. 24; Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah*, pp. 123-24.

[48]Olson, et al., *History of the Swedes*, I, p. 266; Liljegren, et al., *Svenska Metodismen*, pp. 200-3.

[49]Unonius, *A Pioneer*, II, p. 203; Westin, *Emigranterna och kyrkan*, p. 43; Norelius, *De svenska luterska*, I, p. 133.

[50]Moberg, *Unknown Swedes*, p. 24.

[51]Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois*, pp. 52-54; Olson, et al., *History of the Swedes*, I, p. 266; Blomberg, *Heart and Heritage*, pp. 2, 58.

[52]Lilly Setterdahl, "Emigrant Letters by Bishop Hill Colonists from Nora Parish," *Western Illinois Regional Studies*, 1 (1978), pp. 127-28.

[53]Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah*, p. 122; cf. p. 145.

[54]Setterdahl, "Emigrant Letters," pp. 121, 127-28; Stephenson, *Religious Aspects*, pp. 70-71; Olson, et al., *History of the Swedes*, I, p. 266; Mikkelsen, *Bishop Hill Colony*, pp. 70-71. The strongly Janssonist parishes of Nora, Torstuna, and Osterunda lay in Vastmanland County (*län*) but were part of the historic province of Uppland, which has sometimes created some confusion.

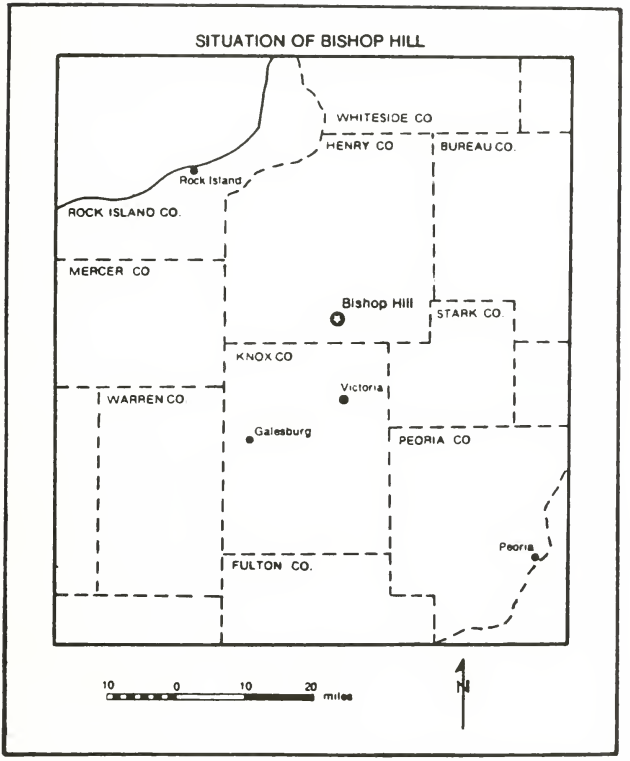
[55]Johnson & Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois*, p. 234; Setterdahl, "Emigrant Letters," p. 127; Nelson, *Swedes and Swedish Settlements*, I, p. 277.

THE BISHOP HILL COLONY: WHAT THEY FOUND

Ronald E. Nelson

Confronted with the task of selecting a settlement site and purchasing land for hundreds of followers who would soon arrive, Eric Jansson and Olof Olsson reached and explored southern Henry County, Illinois, in 1846. The arrival of Jansson and Olsson in Henry Country was a consequence of directions given them by the Hedstrom brothers, two Swedish Methodist clergymen who earlier had settled in the United States. One met Jansson and Olsson when they arrived in New York City and directed them to his brother, Jonas Hedstrom, who served a small congregation in the frontier community of Victoria, Illinois. Nearby southern Henry County was recommended as a settlement site for the Janssonists by Jonas Hedstrom, who no doubt looked forward to their presence in the vicinity.

What did Jansson and his followers find in Henry County as they planted their new settlement, named Bishop Hill after the prophet's birthplace in Sweden? What was the character of the environmental and social setting they encountered? Would it allow for their survival and perhaps eventual prosperity? Would it afford them freedom to worship in their chosen manner, the reason for abandoning their homeland? Would they find tolerant, even friendly neighbors on these unfamiliar plains of western Illinois? The Mormons, another religious group that had established the community of Nauvoo in western Illinois a few years earlier, encountered such conflict with neighbors that they were in the process of abandoning the area in 1846. Would the circumstances in Henry County be more congenial for the Janssonists?



THE FRONTIER AND RETARDED SETTLEMENT IN HENRY COUNTY

Henry County in 1846 was still a frontier area and it remained sparsely populated and largely undeveloped for several years thereafter. As settlement maps (fig. 1) and federal and state census figures verify, the rate of pioneer settlement in the county was extraordinarily slow. In 1840 the county's population total was a mere 1,260 and by 1850, a decade and a half after the first pioneer occupied land in the county, only 3,807 inhabitants were enumerated by the federal census. As table 1 confirms, the population density in Henry was substantially less than that in all of the adjacent counties during the period 1840 through 1855. By 1855 Henry County's population density had increased to 11.2, but that figure was still the lowest of all counties in the area and less than the sixteen

TABLE 1
POPULATION DENSITIES IN HENRY AND ADJACENT COUNTIES, 1840-1855
(in persons per square mile)

County	1840	1850	1855
Henry	1.5	4.6	11.2
Knox	9.7	18.2	31.4
Stark	5.4	12.8	21.6
Bureau	3.5	10.2	22.5
Whiteside	3.0	6.3	15.8
Rock Island	4.7	16.4	38.3
Mercer	4.2	9.4	17.4

Source: Calculated by author

persons per square mile that commonly has been used to mark the end of frontier conditions for areas in eastern United States.

Historians, geographers, and others generally have blamed delayed pioneer settlement in the northern two-thirds of Illinois on problems, both real and imagined, associated with the prairie environment. East-central Illinois, the most extensive area of retarded settlement (fig. 1) and the most dominated by prairie grasses, has attracted the greatest attention. The prairies were relatively distant—and therefore inaccessible—from important waterways used by pioneers, and they posed numerous difficulties for those attempting initially to occupy the land. The shortage of wood on the prairies for such pioneer necessities as shelter, fencing, and fuel was a serious handicap. Seasonal grass fires threatened life and poor drainage — common in the most recently glaciated prairie lands—contributed to a high incidence of malaria and other illnesses. Furthermore, the breaking of prairie sod to prepare the land for crops was laborious and expensive, even after introduction of the steel plow. Could these factors account for the delayed settlement of Henry County?

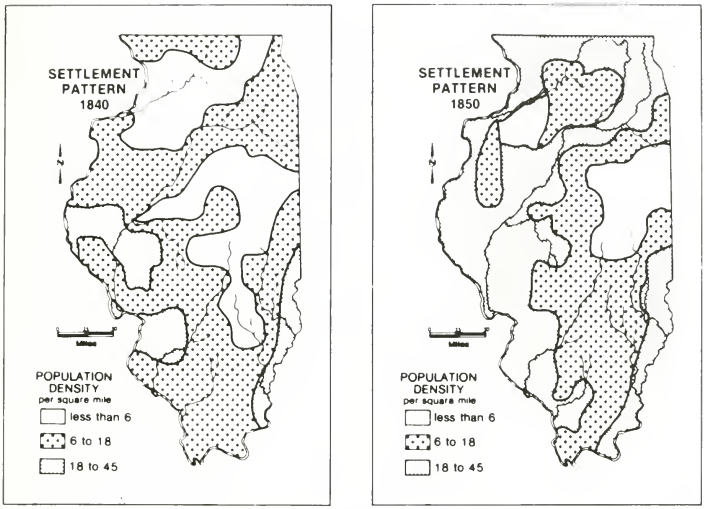


Figure 1. The settlement of Illinois, 1840 and 1850. Henry County closely coincides with the most sparsely populated area northwest of the Illinois River. Source: Adapted from maps in Harlan H. Barrows, Geography of the Middle Illinois Valley. *Bulletin No. 15. Urbana: Illinois State Geological Survey, 1910.*

THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Prairie grasses dominated the territory of Henry County — as they did in nearly all neighboring counties — during the pioneer period. Early estimates of only about 15 percent of the county's area in timber are supported by original survey maps and by twentieth century soil maps that identify timber and prairie soils. The principal wooded areas were along the Rock River and the lower course of the Green River as well as a number of groves, including Red Oak (near Bishop Hill), White Oak, Big Barren, Sugar Tree, and Eight Mile Grove (fig. 2). The dominant species were oak, hickory, maple, and walnut. The prairie grasses that covered the remainder of the county included numerous species, but big bluestem and little bluestem were most common.

Poor drainage during pioneer times was largely confined to northern Henry County, part of the Green River Lowland (fig. 3) that was formed when the Mississippi River earlier followed a course eastward to join the Illinois River. Most of the county, including the site of Bishop Hill, is part of the Galesburg Plain that was much better drained. An area of Illinoisan glaciation, the Galesburg Plain is not as flat as the more recently glaciated prairie lands of east-central Illinois. Instead, it is in a youthful stage of erosion and mostly has gentle slopes that provided adequate drainage for pioneer settlers.

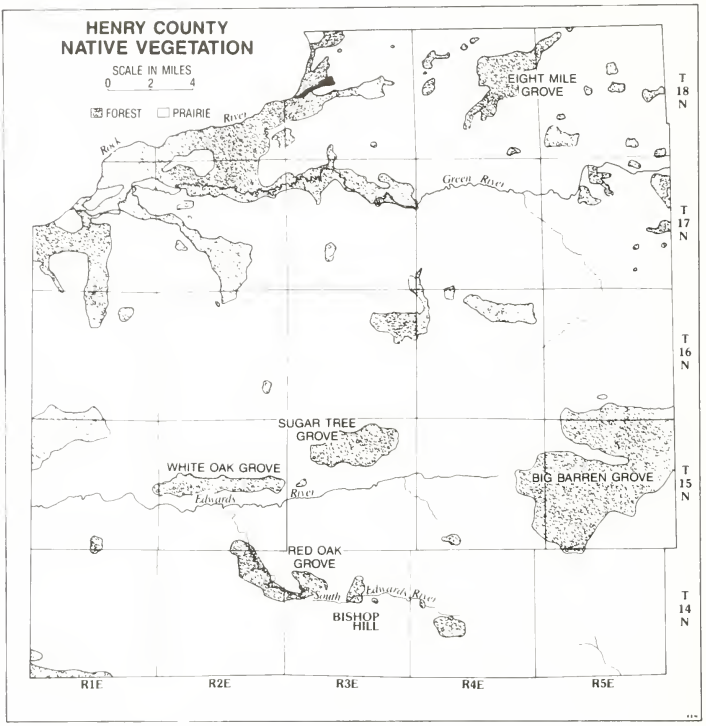


Figure 2. The Native Vegetation of Henry County. Source: Compiled by the author from original survey maps and soil maps.

Because these environmental characteristics were shared by neighboring counties that experienced a more rapid rate of pioneer occupance, they obviously cannot be the basis for a full explanation of the delayed settlement of Henry County. If the extensive prairies in Henry County were an obstacle to early pioneers, the situation must have been similar in neighboring Knox, Stark, Bureau, and Whiteside counties where prairie grasses also covered more than 80 percent of the landscape. The area of poor drainage in Henry County was even exceeded in adjacent Bureau and Whiteside counties. Furthermore, differences in accessibility appear to have been insignificant; both Knox and Stark counties were more distant than Henry County from navigable waterways used by early pioneers.

THE YANKEE COLONIES

The number of organized settlement groups from northeastern United States, called Yankee colonies, was a notable difference between Henry and adjacent counties during the pioneer period and the principal cause of the difference in their rate of pioneer occupance. Five Yankee colonies planned settlements in Henry County, the greatest concentration in the state. Among the adjacent counties, on the other hand, Bureau was the site of two similar schemes, Knox and Whiteside each had one, and Stark, Mercer, and Rock Island had none.

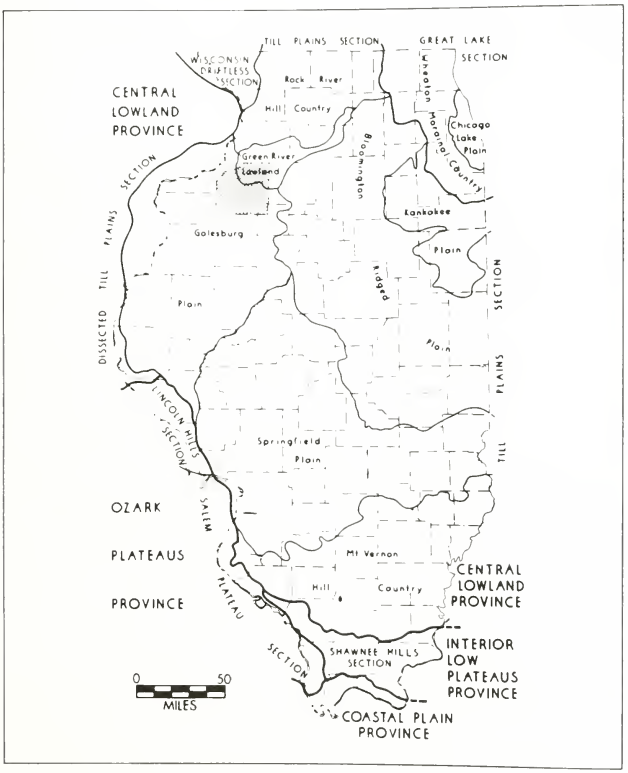


Figure 3. The Physiographic Setting of Henry County. Henry County is the shaded area that forms part of the Green River Lowland and the Galesburg Plain. Source: Adapted from M. M. Leighton, George E. Ekblaw, and Leland Horberg, Physiographic Divisions of Illinois. *Urbana: Illinois State Geological Survey, 1948.*

The popularity of colonies as elements of frontier settlement in the Middle West is striking. An examination of pertinent historical literature has enabled me to identify thirty-six settlements in Illinois that were planted by colonies, twenty-five of which were organized in New England and New York State. Nearly all of the colony settlements in Illinois were founded during the 1830s, a time of rapid frontier expansion in the state.

The Yankee colony settlement schemes in Henry County appear to have been representative of all such ventures. Four of the groups were organized in New York State and the fifth was formed in southern New England. On the frontier of Henry County in 1835, 1836, and 1837, these groups acquired 57,410 acres—about 11 percent of the county's area—and established the communities of Andover, Wethersfield, LaGrange, Morristown, and Geneseo (fig. 4). These schemes were spawned by two movements in the Northeast that attained maximum development during the 1830s. One was a Congregational-Presbyterian religious movement called "the Great Revival;" the second was speculation in western land. Congregational and Presbyterian clergymen exhorted the faithful to band together and, by means of colony settlements, to assist in the establishment of Puritan society in the Mississippi Valley in order to counteract feared Catholic domination of that region. At that same time, Yankee speculators envisaged colony settlement ventures to be a convenient means of acquiring attractive profits. The blending of these two objectives was explained in the following passage written by an early Henry County pioneer:

> Some considerable confidence was felt by members [of the Wethersfield Colony] that the undertaking would eventuate not only in a good crop of converted Catholics, the establishment of temperance, justice, charity, and other moral characteristics; but that a fair return in the shape of dividends in kind, upon the money invested, would also accrue.[1]

In addition to the Wethersfield Colony, that at Andover also combined speculation with religious and social goals. The LaGrange and Morristown colonies, however, were solely speculation ventures, while the Geneseo scheme had only religious and social objectives.

The organization of the Wethersfield, Andover, LaGrange, and Morristown colonies involved the formation of a colony treasury by the sale of shares to members. Each group subsequently used its fund to purchase land, survey the property, and plat a colony town. Shareholders in the colony venture were then permitted to exercise either of two options: (1) they could accept the proportion of the colony's lands and town lots to which they were entitled and join the new settlement, thereby dissolving their financial association with the colony, or (2) they could remain in the East and await their share of anticipated profits from the colony's sale of its lands and lots not claimed by members. Expecting an increase in the value of the property with the establishment of their settlement, the colonies looked forward to substantial profits from the sale of their unclaimed lands and lots. After deducting expenses, these funds would be divided among those shareholders who preferred to remain in the East.

My conclusion that the Yankee colony schemes were primarily responsible for the delayed occupance of Henry County is based on evidence that the colonies not only failed to execute effective settlement of their lands (over 57,000 acres) but also repelled other pioneers who were potential settlers in the county. Only

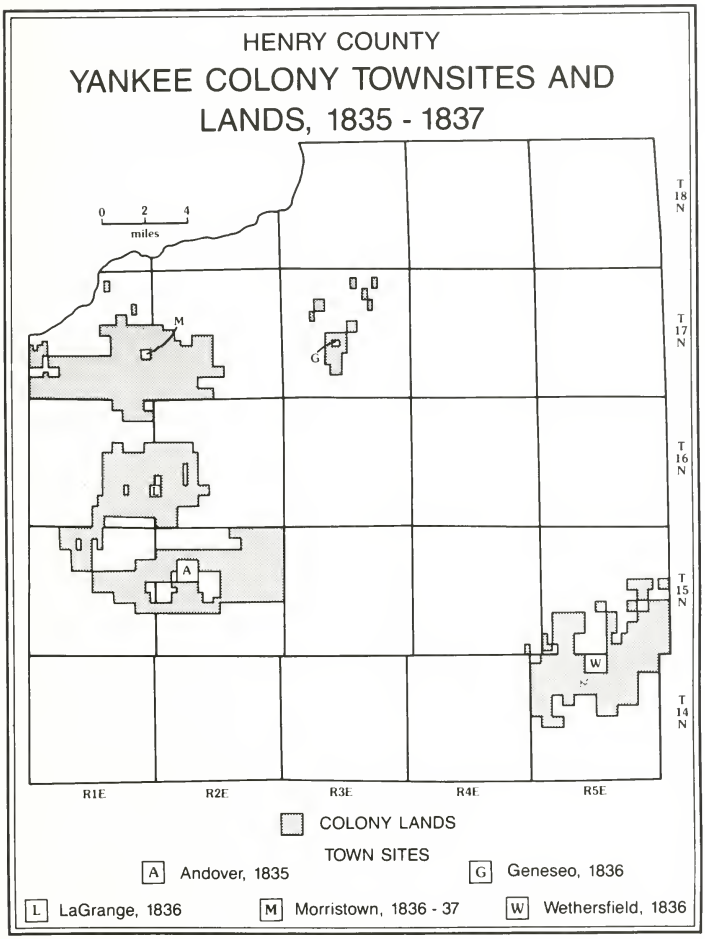


Figure 4. The Yankee Colony Townsites and Lands in Henry County, 1835-1837. Source: Compiled by the author from deed records in the Henry County Courthouse, Cambridge.

a limited number of stockholders in the colonies opted to become settlers in the West. The Geneseo Colony, which comprised only eight families, was the only one to succeed in placing its entire membership on colony lands acquired in the county. Among the other four colonies, which had shareholders ranging in number from fifty to ninety, fewer than ten families settled at LaGrange and Morristown and no more than twenty-five to thirty shareholder families located in Wethersfield and Andover. Although the most successful in placing people on its lands, the Wethersfield Colony could enumerate only 378 individuals, including outside purchasers as well as shareholders, on its property in 1848. It seems clear that most shareholders, especially those involved in the LaGrange and Morristown schemes, were speculators who wanted no part of the rigors of pioneering on the prairie frontier in Illinois.

While the Yankee colonies had only limited success in placing shareholders on their Henry County holdings, their efforts to sell unclaimed lands and lots to outsiders were even less rewarding. Interest in profits motivated the colonies to ask relatively high prices for their properties. With an abundance of public land still available at government land offices for only $1.25 an acre, most area pioneers no doubt considered the more expensive colony lands to be unattractive purchases. In addition, the Panic of 1836 and ensuing depression diminished the prospect for land sales. Most undistributed colony properties in Henry County were eventually sold for taxes in the late 1840s and early 1850s. Thus, by their inability to place significant numbers of people on their rather substantial landholdings, Yankee colonies seem to have contributed to the delay of settlement in Henry County for over a decade.

Even lands adjacent to colony holdings apparently were avoided by other pioneers because of their suspicion and distrust of the colonies. In an 1859 issue of a Henry County newspaper it was noted that "to outsiders, the feeling of exclusiveness seemed to prevail among the colonists."[2] Another issue in the same year reported that a man traveling through the area had commented that he "couldn't stop in Henry County, 'twas too full of colonies. Had to put up at one little town there, filled with damned Yankees, who lived by skinning each other."[3] In addition, an early settler in the county wrote:

> . . .very few save those originally concerned would settle near these colonies, for believing they were mere traps, set to inveigle outsiders into their midst, for the purpose of fleecing them. I remember many instances of prospectors in '36, declining to settle near such colonies for fear of the cliques they might find there.[4]

Such evidence leads me to conclude that the concentration of Yankee colonies in Henry County was the primary reason for delayed settlement of the county and persistence of frontier conditions that the Janssonists encountered in 1846 and several years thereafter.

CONCLUSIONS

The Janssonists not only succeeded in establishing a permanent settlement on the prairie frontier of Henry County, they even enjoyed a high level of prosperity for a few years prior to the economic erosion caused by the depression of 1857. They overcame the initial obstacles to pioneering on the prairie by such actions as assembling a large herd of oxen to pull sod-breaking plows, manufac-

turing brick to use as an alternative to wood as a building material, and experimenting with sod fence. Then they adopted broom corn as a profitable commercial crop and operated mills, workshops, a hotel, and a store to provide goods and services for area customers. A visitor to Bishop Hill in 1856 examined the accumulated possessions of the colony and proclaimed: "the fact is they are rich."[5]

The Bishop Hill Colony appears to have benefited in some ways from the delayed settlement and persistence of frontier conditions in Henry County. For example, land was readily available for the Janssonists to acquire, and by the late 1850s they owned 11,000 acres. Also, the area's sparse population may have reduced the problem of neighbors feeling threatened by the presence of this unusual religious group at Bishop Hill. Certainly the congenial relationship between the Janssonists and their neighbors was in contrast to the situation in the Mormon Nauvoo vicinity where population densities were much greater.

The general acceptance of the Bishop Hill Colony by other inhabitants of the county also may have been facilitated by their exposure to the earlier Yankee colonies, particularly the three religious groups. This experience probably made the Bishop Hill Colony and its settlement experiment seem less strange and less threatening than would have been the case in a different setting. The Janssonists also facilitated their own assimilation by immediately setting out to learn the English language and developing close business associations with other people in the area.

When the Janssonists arrived in Henry County, therefore, they found only a sparse population and little development. The prairie-dominated natural landscape mostly remained in pristine condition, little changed by settlers. Prior settlement attempts by five Yankee colonies had failed to place significant numbers of people on the land. Yet these frontier conditions were critical to the successful establishment of the Janssonist colony at Bishop Hill.

NOTES

[1]Dr. A. A. Dunn Letters, Collections of the Illinois Historical Survey, Urbana, IL.

[2]*Henry County Chronicle,* August 23, 1959.

[3]*Henry County Chronicle,* March 29, 1959.

[4]*Ibid.*

[5]Quoted in William H. Hinds, *American Communities and Co-operative Colonies* (Chicago: Charles A. Kerr, 1980), p. 354.

THE BUILDING OF BISHOP HILL

Ronald E. Nelson

As research continues on the Bishop Hill Colony more information can be brought to bear upon the different areas of colony's physical development. There is no question that the Swedes from central Sweden found a very unfamiliar environment in Illinois and that this condition affected their approach to building problems.

Several myths have existed about building techniques that the colonists knew. While it is true their area had few if any brick buildings it is not true they did not know how to make bricks or how to use them. Bricks had been used to build fireplaces and chimneys for at least 100 years prior to their coming to Illinois. The addition of August Bandholtz as chief mason did not alter the design or construction of the colony buildings. Bandholtz came to Bishop Hill in 1849 and left in 1855. It is my opinion that the influence of Bandholtz is greatly overemphasized.

The different resources of the prairie greatly influenced how structures were designed. The tall straight spruce and pine of central Sweden did not exist in Illinois. Huge deciduous trees which were not suitable for cabins did, however, supply wood for siding, shingles, and floor joists in masonry bearing wall buildings. The recognition of this fact was immediate in that a water-driven vertical sawmill and a shingle mill were purchased in 1847.

A resource that they always could depend on in Sweden was good water power, but the Edwards River was completely useless as a power source for eight months of the year. In 1850 they nevertheless decided to build a steamill to grind flour. An important side benefit of owning a steam engine was its use to power a circular saw, a planing mill, and a turning lathe all of which soon were purchased.[1]

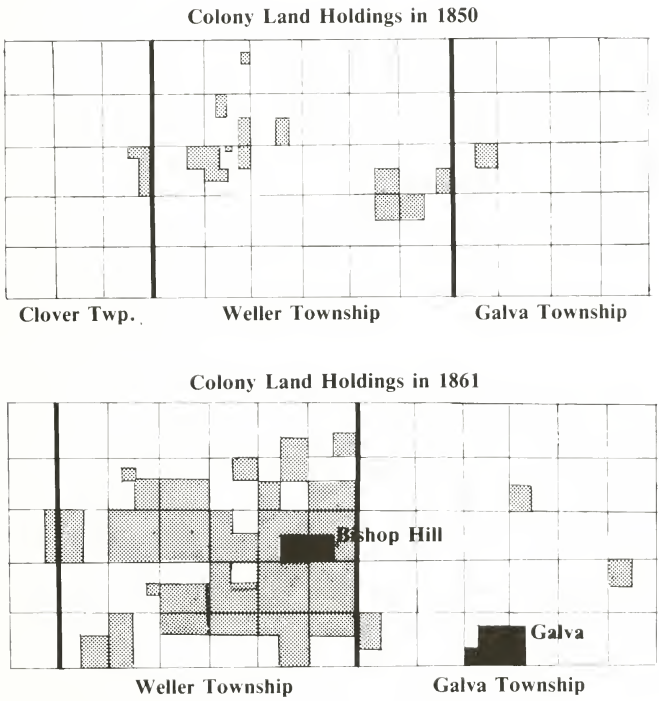
Another point which needs to be emphasized is that doing things in the old manual way was not a part of Bishop Hill Colony. The use of power equipment extended to all facets of colony production. In an article from *Revue Icarienne* noted:

> "There is as well 1 steam mill with 2 pair of grindstones, 1 saw, a planing machine, 1 water mill, 1 dye works, a crushing machine, 1 tannery, 1 large smithy with 6 forges, 1 horse powered machinists lathe, 1 forge for making horse shoes; workshops for painters, harness makers, wheelwrights; 1 sugar refinery which this year pressed a large quantity of sorghum molasses."[2]

As we have accumulated more information on Bishop Hill it becomes evident that the colony may be divided into three periods of growth. The first period, 1846-1848, may be considered as the pioneer period when the primary purpose

of the community was survival. In the second period, 1848-1850, they established adequate housing for the community and a base of support to avoid new crises in housing and food. The period of 1850-1861 can be denoted as a commercial period when they developed property for the community through economic diversity.

These different periods reflect not only the building of Bishop Hill but also all other aspects—land purchases, equipment purchases, outside employment, and investment in other areas. By 1850, for example, the colony owned 1,380 acres and this land had been purchased and held for the community by individuals since there was no formal organization. By 1860, the Bishop Hill colony as a legal corporation owned 11,415 acres.[3]



Bishop Hill Colony land acquisitions from 1850 to 1861. Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

The building of Bishop Hill began immediately after the arrival of the first group on September 23, 1846. I am sure that the Swedes were well aware that winter was upon them. In this situation they resorted to known methods and borrowed ideas from their American neighbors. The dugouts resembled structures used in the mountain pastures of Sweden for temporary shelters. Of course the Swedes were very familiar with log construction and the use of sod roofs.

In 1846 in Bishop Hill 330 people, and at Red Oak Grove seventy people, spent the winter. The land purchased at Red Oak had a log cabin 1½ stories high and 14' x 20'. In this cabin the seventy people slept in shifts and fifty of the seventy died during the winter of 1846-47. Of the approximately 330 people in Bishop Hill, 100 died. Speculation by Dr. Olov Isaksson of Sweden's Statens Historiska Museet places blame for the high mortality rate on the rigors of the trip of up to four months.[4]

By June 8, 1847 Lars Lindbeck mentioned that the water mill out west, the site which is just west of present Route 82 on the Edwards River was running and that his first job was to build ovens to bake bread. These ovens were outdoor ovens in which the fire was built in the oven chamber and then raked out to allow the bread to be placed in the oven.[5]

In 1847 three adobe buildings were built and twenty eight dugouts had been completed. Our only knowledge of Bishop Hill's appearance comes from two oral descriptions, one by John Hellsen and one by Lars Lindbeck. Olof Krans painted Bishop Hill as it appeared in 1846 but we must remember that he did not live in Bishop Hill at the time. I am sure the idealized view of "Bishop Hill in 1846" paints a pastoral view that is not accurate. In 1847 a red frame house was built directly north of the Colony Church for a weaving and spinning shop. Several small shops were built of frame wood.

With the beginning of the Colony Church in 1848 a new era started. The commitment to major buildings is evident with the church and the north section of Big Brick. The significance of these two structures is that they provide sixty eight apartment units, a church which can also function as a school, and a dining hall which seats 500 people in the north Big Brick. The completion of the Big Brick tied in with the lifting of the marriage ban when the wedding feast for fourteen couples was held in the dining hall on March 10, 1850.

The steam mill and water mill on the north edge of Bishop Hill were completed in 1850 which again added to the security of the colony by providing both food and hard currency through custom milling. In 1851 the colony focused its construction efforts to improve their food processing capabilities with the south Big Brick, meat house, and tannery. In 1852 the Bjorklund Hotel was built in a two story building looking much like the Big Brick. Hodin's Building (carpenter shop) and the bakery and brewery were also put up that same year.

In 1853 two structures were built that begin to reflect the colony's commitment to become a neoclassical American city. The Steeple Building is the architectural gem of Bishop Hill and reflects that style of architecture. The Colony Store (built by hired masons) is also a classic American building. From 1853 on, all of the structures built in Bishop Hill reflect the classic revival style. This was unusual in that we believe classic revival began to leave the American scene by 1850.

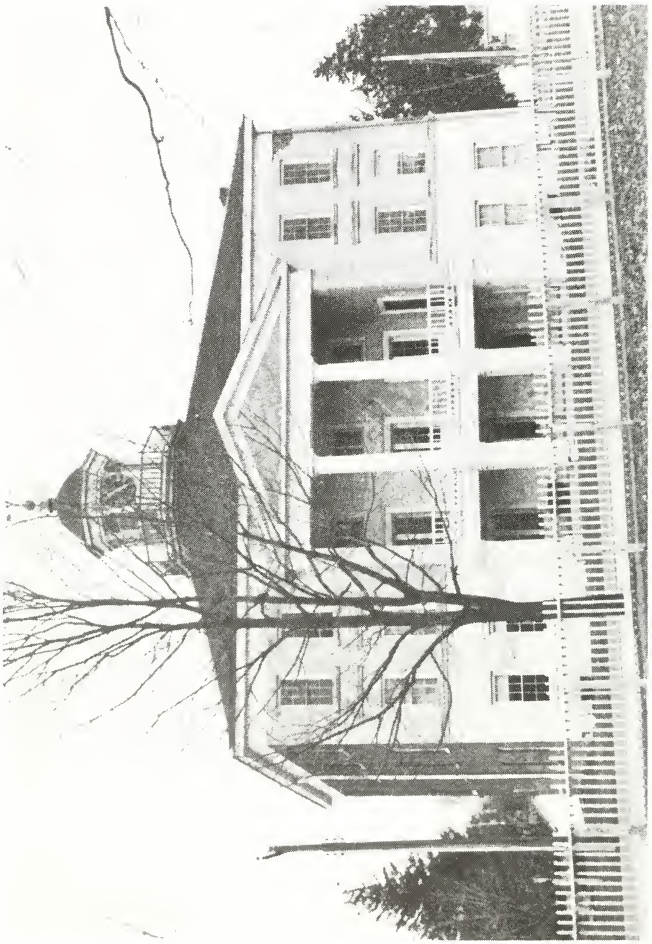
1847 Grist Mill. When it was discovered that the flow of the Edwards River would not power a water wheel, a brick steam mill was built and this building used as a granary until 1949 when it was demolished. Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

Bishop Hill, 1846. Painting by Olof Krans. Courtesy of the Illinois Department of Conservation.

Bishop Hill, Colony Church. Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

1848-51 Big Brick, destroyed by fire in 1928, served as a dwelling and dining halls in the colony with ninety-six sleeping rooms. The Bakery and Brewery Building appears at the right and numerous coal and cob sheds to the left beyond the ditch. The grist mill is visible in the distance. Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

Earliest known photo of the Bjorklund Hotel c. 1865 Administration Building and Apartment House. Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

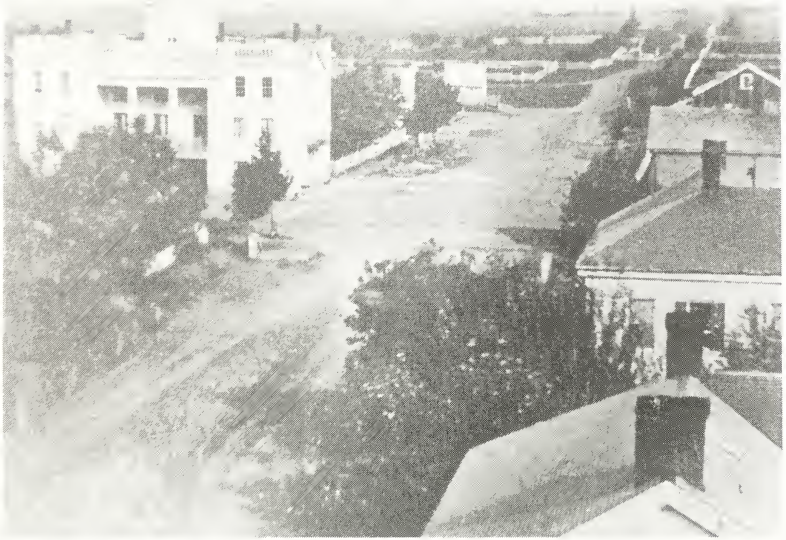


Bishop Hill Steeple Building

Bishop Hill Park with Civil War Statue, from 1981 photograph.

Taken from the tower of the Steeple Building, this 1890's photo shows numerous privies, coal and cob houses and barns. The large building on the left is the Mission Friends Church which was later moved to Galva. Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

Colony Meat Storage Building with adjacent smoke house and slaughterhouse, barn and feed lot are behind. Only the Meat Storage Building is standing today. Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.



Earliest known photograph of Bishop Hill, c. 1868 taken from the hotel tower shows the Steeple Building with a flat roof, cattle lots to the east and unidentified outbuildings behind. Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

The idealistic and optimistic nature of Bishop Hill colony was the major factor in choosing what had become the American style of architecture. The Bishop Hill people were very conscious of becoming Americans and showed this commitment in the construction of a "New Jerusalem" to which all men would come. Their buildings reflected his idealism.[6]

With the completion of the Steeple Building and Colony Store in 1853 the most ambitious period of construction began. A brick smokehouse directly east of the meat storage house was built in 1854. 1855 was the busiest construction year yet with the Dairy Building, Apartment House, Hospital Building, Red Oak House, and Krusbo going up. In 1856 the expanded colony businesses caused the administration building to be built, a structure which included apartments for visitors dealing with the colony in business. In 1857 the Blacksmith Shop was expanded to its present form from a 1½ story brick building. This allowed for an expansion of the wagon and carriage industry and improved blacksmithing services for the community. After the depression of 1857 the only major structure built was the Colony School. It was completed after the dissolution in 1861. This building was first intended to be two stories but due to the pending dissolution of the colony only one story was finished.

This brief account summarizes the building of the major buildings within today's community but huge gaps that exist must yet be filled in.

THE PARK

The village park existed as an oak grove with a deep ravine in it. The park was the site for numerous colony structures as well as the spring which was what determined the exact location of Bishop Hill. Before the ravine was filled in several things had to be done. First, the spring had to be turned into a well by bricking it as the fill went in; and second, an arched sewer had to be built in the bottom of the ravine to maintain drainage. This sewer exists today running from the administration building to the north end of the park.

The addition of twenty feet of fill in the bottom of the park was accomplished in 1856 by the use of slips and oxen with the largest part of the fill coming from the west side but also some from the east part of the park. Lars Lindbeck recalls that in 1857 "the park was planted. I put trees in east and west," he wrote, "Florin north and south".[7] We also know that the picket fence was up by 1857 and its purpose was to keep the livestock out of the park. A gazebo was first built as nearly as can be determined in the late 1850's.

OUTBUILDINGS

The greatest change in the appearance of Bishop Hill has been in the loss of the outbuildings. People who remember post-colony Bishop Hill always mention the coal and cob houses but these structures seem to have been built after the colony division to allow for individual fuel storage and tools. There was also a proliferation of privies as the large communal ones were abandoned.

During the colony period it seems each major building had a fuel storage shed about 8' x 16' which had two compartments, one for coal which was obtained

from the colony's own mines at Victoria and Centerville about fifteen miles away, and from barter with people from the Victoria area.

Each residence also had a privy and these were described as eight or six holers. One at Big Brick was known as Andover. Many people recently have felt this had a basis in the rivalry between the two Swedish communities (Andover being the site of the Augustana Lutherans, twelve miles from Bishop Hill), but colony descendant Asa Spets told me that the name came from the feeling that on a January night, a visit to that privy was like a walk to Andover.

Within Bishop Hill itself, there were many barns generally of the conformation of the barn behind the Bjorklund Hotel. Some exceptions were major buildings behind the meat storage house. The cattle barns some 200 feet long were used to fatten cattle prior to slaughter. It is estimated, based on 1866 tax maps, that there were twenty two barns in the community.

There were ice houses, sorghum house, Troil's gold shop, the first brewery, washhouses, mangle sheds all of which I have mention of but have not been able to locate.

The colony land holdings began by the 1850s to dictate that outlying residences be constructed to cut down travel time for the work crews during planting and harvesting. The Red House, Sorbo, Providence and New Providence were such places, built as dormitories with men's and women's rooms for sleeping. These houses usually had a couple who lived in them year round as caretakers and who would be responsible for preparing food for the workers.

Krusbo served as the eastern residence of the colony and was the center of the pasture complex. The inventories of 1861 show much cheese making equipment at Krusbo and it must be assumed that the summer was when this occurred and the cattle were moved to the village for the winter.

The subject of how many auxiliary structures were built will be a continuing one as more archival evidence, photographs, and archaeological work add to our knowledge. This sketch should not be considered as a final look at how much was built by Bishop Hill Colony in its amazing fifteen year life span. When the amount of construction is looked at, it would be hard to accomplish today with the same number of people and modern machinery what Bishop Hill colony did between 1846 and 1861.

NOTES

[1]Minutes of the Bishop Hill Colony, 1850. Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection, Bishop Hill Heritage Assn., Bishop Hill, Illinois.

[2]Wistrand, "La colonie de Bishop Hill," St. Louis: *Revue Icarienne,* February 1, 1859.

[3]Wilson, J. Hiram, "Property as a Social Institution in the Bishop Hill Colony: An Ethnohistorical Study," (honors paper, Knox College, 1973).

[4]Nystrom, Merrill, 1985. Interviewed by Ronald E. Nelson. Unpublished interview notes, Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection, Bishop Hill Heritage Assn., Bishop Hill, Illinois.

[5]Lindbeck, Lars. Letter to P.J. Stoneberg dated June 2, 1908. Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection, Bishop Hill Heritage Assn., Bishop Hill, Illinois.

[6]Charter of the Bishop Hill Colony, May 6, 1854, Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection, Bishop Hill Heritage Assn., Bishop Hill, Illinois.

[7]Lindbeck. Letter to P. J. Stoneberg.

LIVING IN COMMUNITY: DAILY LIFE IN THE BISHOP HILL COLONY

Jon Wagner

The series for which this paper was written has considered various aspects of Bishop Hill's history; yet one of the most interesting and elusive aspects of this story, the communal social organization that set Bishop Hill apart from most other American frontier communities, has rarely been dealt with in any detail.[1] Biship Hill was, from the time of its founding until the formal dissolution of 1861, a communal society in which the members shared their material wealth and labored for the common good. This fact is well recognized, but there has been little systematic treatment of how the colonists actually experienced the communal system in their daily activities or what it meant to them. In this paper I shall examine the day-to-day routines that made up life in the colony and consider how the colonists themselves viewed their cooperative life, concentrating on the colonist's own testimony, first-hand observations by visitors, and early researchers who interviewed the colonists.

While some have speculated that Eric Jansson adopted the notion of "Bible communism" as early as 1843, at the beginning of his ministry in Sweden, no direct evidence has been produced in support of that claim.[2] In any case, the actual practice of communalism was not adopted until the time of the Janssonist emigration in 1846. Like many other communal Christian sects, the Janssonists took seriously the example of the Apostles: "Neither was there any among them that lacked: for as many as were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the prices of the things that were sold. And laid them at the apostles' feet: and distribution was made unto every man according as he had need." (Acts 4:34-35) Philip J. Stoneberg's interviews with surviving colonists at the turn of the century suggested that their adoption of communalism was grounded in a combination of pragmatism and religious idealism. He wrote:

> Their thoughts were directed constantly to the early Christians in apostolic times, so when they decided to emigrate they followed the example of the first Christians at Jerusalem by selling their possessions and forming a common treasury . . . A common fund was necessary if all should obtain sustenance and transportation across the Atlantic to America and Illinois and support during the first period in their new home. Thus from scriptural example and circumstance the principles of communism were adopted by the Janssonists to be continued during the entire existence of the colony.[3]

Eric Jansson's son, Captain Eric Johnson, reports that ". . . there were several

members in the company who enriched the treasury with very large sums, from 24,000 down to 12,000, 9,000, 5,000 kronor, etc."[4] On the other hand, many were in debt after settling their accounts, particularly those who had to pay 1,000 riksdaler in lieu of their military obligations. Some took advantage of the communal arrangement, defecting once they reached America. Nonetheless the communal fund accomplished its most immediate objective, for it ultimately enabled between 1,300 and 1,400 Janssonists to embark for Bishop Hill, about a thousand of whom emigrated during the colony's first year of existence.[5]

Arriving in July, 1846 at the site already selected by their advance scout Olof Olsson, Jansson and his party immediately began construction of dwellings for the expected arrivals. About thirty semi-underground log cabins or "dugouts" were built in a ravine near the center of what was to become Bishop Hill. By the onset of winter, some 400 colonists were quartered at the village site and at a nearby outpost in Red Oak Grove. The first winter was disastrous: weakened by the arduous voyage and facing the winter without adequate food or comfortable housing, the colonists suffered a mortality rate of more than one third.[6]

Even during this difficult period the colonists established the structures of daily life and social organization that would serve them, with some refinements and modifications, for the next fifteen years. The colonists assembled for two-hour religious services twice daily—before breakfast and again after the evening meal—in a cross-shaped tent church built to hold 800 to 1,000 worshipers. Jansson himself arose at 5:00 to awaken his followers, and by Christmas he had acquired a bell with which he called the people to church services and communal meals.[7] Eric Jansson, and the cadre of close his followers including Olof Johnsson and Jonas Olsson, were not simply religious leaders: they held title to the land and property and oversaw the organization of communal work, distribution of goods, and other aspects of everyday life.

One of the best early accounts of colony life is contained in a letter by Anders Larsson, who had left the Janssonists before they reached Bishop Hill and who visited the fledgling colony in June, 1847. Although Larsson criticized the colonists' faith in Jansson, he was clearly quite impressed with what their practical accomplishments, observing that "They've put in quite unbelievable amounts of work during this short time." The colonists had established not only the foundations of material production but also the outlines of a communal economic system. Larsson observed that:

> Everything is said to be communal, and no one has any more than the other. If someone needs clothes, it's only [necessary] to go to the management, then to the stores, and take what is needed. Cooking and eating takes place in three kitchens. No one works more than he wants, but all live in the belief that the more industrious they are, the more each will get at [the time of] division.

In a footnote, however, Larsson expressed his doubts about the anticipated breakup of communalism: "But when this division will take place, I'll leave unsaid."[8]

Larsson's skepticism was prophetic. Instead of a dismantling of communalism, the next decade saw a firm entrenchment of it. Following Jansson's assassination in 1850, the colony came under the leadership of Jansson's closest associates who formalized their position as "trustees" under the colony charter of 1853. The colony charter cited a religious justification for communalism and spelled

out the responsibilities of the colony in providing for the material needs of its members. It also helped give legal status to the communal system by allowing for property to be held in the name of the community rather than of individual leaders. As a further refinement, the 1854 revision of the by-laws allowed, for the first time, financial compensation to those who left the colony.[9] By the mid-fifties, Bishop Hill had reached its peak as a thriving, affluent, harmonious communal society. This "golden age," however, came to a rather abrupt end after the undisclosed financial speculations of the trustees collapsed in the world economic crisis of 1857. As the trustees doggedly resisted members' demands for a detailed disclosure of colony economic affairs, the colony split into pro- and anti-communal factions, and amid this bitter dissention the colony declined until its official dissolution in 1861.

The structure of communal life in Bishop Hill appears to have been rather stable over the whole span of the colony period. Although there were some trends and gradual changes, the main features of daily life seem to have continued in the pattern set during the first year of the colony's existence. In the remainder of this article I shall first examine various aspects of daily community life, noting such changes and trends as the record reveals, and then consider the complex issue of how the colonists themselves viewed the significance of communal living.

There appears to be no documentary evidence in support of Mikkelsen's claim that the colony's maximum population at times exceeded 1,000.[10] Passport records indicated that as many as 1,400 Janssonists left Sweden, but some were lost at sea and many left the sect before, or soon after, arriving in Bishop Hill. The mortality rate in the community was high, particularly during the first winter and in the summer of 1849 when about 150 colonists died in a cholera epidemic.[11] Although Anders Larsson gave a population figure of 600 for June of 1847, [12] disease and defections may have reduced the colonists to as few as 400 by 1850, after which the population again rose to a peak of between 700 or more in the late 1850's.[13]

At first the colony emphasized the production of food, building materials, and manufactured items for internal use. Anders Larsson reported that by June of 1847 the colony had the only flour mill within thirty miles, two sawmills, and "tannery, roofing shake facility, and shops of all types." He also mentioned that the colonists had sown 400 acres in wheat, 700 in corn, 3-400 in barley and oats, and "many hundreds" in potatoes, and were busily planting trees when he arrived.[14] The first season of farming, however, produced enough flax for the colony to manufacture 12,000 yards of linen for sale; production continually increased, and in 1851 the community produced more than 30,000 yards of linen cloth and carpeting from colony flax.[15] Broom corn became another important cash crop, bringing $36,000 into the colony in 1854[16] The colony also manufactured brooms, carriages, and wagons for sale outside the community.

The Janssonists were quick to adopt any promising new technology that came their way. Although there were few if any brick buildings in the region of their origin, they soon established their own brickyard, and from 1849 to 1861 they constructed about a dozen substantial brick buildings including the huge dwelling and dining hall known as "Big Brick," said to have been the largest building in America west of Chicago.[17] The architectural style and interior furnishings

Interior of the Colony Church.

of the buildings reflected, for the most part, prevailing American tastes. It was perhaps in agricultural technology, however, that they were most progressive. For their second harvest they adopted the grain cradle, a hand-reaping tool unknown in Sweden, and in the same year they acquired a threshing machine which they hauled to neighboring farms, taking one-eighth of the processed grain in return for their services. They experimented with a mechanical reaper in 1849 but found it less productive than the cradles, with which they had become quite skilled, and in 1852 an improved machine reaper retired the cradles for good.[18]

The census of 1850, not long after the disastrous cholera epidemic, shows the colony still lagging behind the rest of the county in economic development, but by the time of the 1860 census it had become a center of industry and prosperity.[19] At its peak in the fifties, the colony contained:

> ...a general store and post-office, a smithy, a brewery, a bakery, a weaving establishment, a dye-house, and a hotel, together with wagon, furniture, harness, tailor and shoemaker shops. Besides, there was a hospital, a laundry, bath-houses, mills and manufactories. The store and post-office employed two clerks. The tailor shop employed six men and three women; the shoemaker shop, six men; the smithy, ten men; the wagon shop, six men. The smithy boasted seven forges, while the wagon shop was extensively known throughout the country for the excellent character of its work. The weaving establishment contained twelve reels and twelve hand looms, besides which one hundred and forty spinning-wheels were distributed privately among the women of the community. The broomshop employed three men and nine women and turned out thirty dozen of brooms a day.[20]

An 1859 article in the *Revue Icarienne* also mentions coal mines, a steam mill, a tannery, a machine shop and a sorghum refinery.

Despite the various industries, agriculture continued as the mainstay of the communal economy, to which all other activities were subordinated at the busiest times. A visitor to the colony in 1853 was particularly impressed with the size and efficiency of the agricultural operation: fifty men cultivating a cornfield "where every furrow was two miles in length"; fifty milkmaids emptying the milk from 200 cows into an immense tub; a hundred horses "the equal of which it would be hard to find" "We . . . were received with great kindness and hospitality," he wrote. "Everything, seemingly, was on the top of prosperity. The people lived in large, substantial brick houses. We had never before seen so large a farm, nor one so well cultivated . . .."[21]

Other reports of visitors to the colony tended to emphasize these same two themes: the hospitality of the colonists and the scale, orderliness and efficiency of economic activity. By the end of the colony period, Bishop Hill's farm lands had grown to more than 11,000 acres valued at over $400,000.[22] Even ardent anti-Janssonists could appreciate the material accomplishments of the colonists: "Eric Jansson has now gone to his just reward," wrote one after a visit to Bishop Hill, "but praise be the Providence which permits even gross delusions and crimes to bring blessed results." [23]

Concerning the organization and morale of the work force, the same visitor wrote, "The membership is divided into trades, from which each chooses that which pleases him best, and everyone seems to work with pleasure and interest for the colony."[24] Philip Stoneberg's interviews with former colonists suggested that "Every department in the industry of the Colony had its manager and every worker belonged to some department for a longer or shorter period according to his talents and disposition."[25] Individual colonists were assigned to the depart-

Bishop Hill blacksmith and craft shops.

ments on the basis of age, sex, ability and preference. *Karin*, a 1936 biography of colonist Catherin Norlin by her daughter Minnie C. Norlin explained:

> To feed and house in a sanitary way, this great family called for clocklike appointments and divisions of labor . . .. In this carefully planned manner was the work divided, always suiting a group activity to abilities. Certain tasks were for those in the prime of their strength. Other tasks were for the aged or feebler; others for the growing boys and girls. Others gave themselves wholly to executive work, [or to] marketing and buying . . .. [26]

The colony women were important contributors in every sector of the communal economy. This fact is partly the result of the broad range of tasks traditionally allocated to rural Swedish women; furthermore, the communal nature of traditional "household" functions at Bishop Hill permitted them to be carried out with greater efficiency, allowing women's time to be freed for other activities vital to establishing and maintaining the colony. One fact in particular, however, is significant in this connection: while the Janssonists leaving Sweden included about equal numbers of women and men, available population figures from the colony indicate a female-male ratio of about two to one—perhaps reflecting a greater attrition on the part of the men, who would have had more opportunity to strike off on their own.[27] Norlin wrote:

> Each group of women and girls was assigned for a stated time, often a week, to different tasks. One week it might be to the dairy; milking, churning, calf-feeding, care of the milk rooms and of the cows' quarters, all planned in detail. The next week the assignment might be to the bakery, the kitchen, the dining room, the laundry or the sleeping quarters. Many fine mangels helped lighten the laundry work.[28]

Stoneberg's interviews suggest that some, at least, of the women's work departments were managed by men.[29] In addition to their cooking, sewing, cleaning, spinning and other "feminine" tasks, the women made, carried, and sometimes laid bricks, and they built bridges, mills, and ponds. Women appear in many of the work scenes painted from memory, at the turn of the century, by colonist Olof Krans. One of Krans' most striking paintings depicts cornplanting exactly as it is described in *Karin:*

> A long marker, sometimes marked for twenty-four rows of corn, was manipulated at either end by a man. Toeing this marker, each at a designated mark, were as many women as there were to be rows of corn. Each had folded up one corner of her apron and tied it securely, making a little bag. This held the seedcorn. With a hoe, in rhythmic time a hole was made, the seed dropped in, and carefully covered. The marker was then moved ahead for the next hole and thus this human check-row planter moved steadily on. Small wonder the mid-meal lunch was provided.[30]

Small wonder, too, that Eric Jansson's son credited much of the colony's success to "the women's muscular strength and skill."[31]

Children, when not in school, also had their jobs. Little girls sometimes aided in the cornplanting described above (it was their part to drop the seeds into each hole), picked burrs from the fields, tended poultry, and stood watch against hogs that might stray into town. Boys and girls hoed, weeded, and raked.[32] Boys of ten to twelve were entrusted with the important job of tending the oxen used in agriculture. After a day's work at this strenuous and often frustrating task, the weary "ox-boys" could look forward to the special honor of dining with the adults.[33] The *esprit de corps* must have been high, for one former colonist recollected that an insult to one of the ox-boys was likely to be avenged by the others.[34] One of the few surviving songs about the colony is "Bishop Hill Koloniens Oxpojkar," or the Ox-Boy Song. Sung to the tune of "Marching Through

Tovås mor (Tovin's mother) who was Kate Olander, one of the colony women who worked as brick masons along with the men.

Georgia," its nine verses tell of humorous events in the lives of the ox-boys and reflect an aging colonist's nostalgia for his youth in the colony:

> Merry were the many times, oxboys at play
> From the eyes of parents dear gathered far away;
> Perhaps made a misstep then, maybe made another
> Did the boys who drove the oxen.
>
> In the summer's hottest days they the cordwood hauled,
> "Lower sawmill's" steepest hills up and down they crawled;
> The oxen went plum in the stream, the load it followed too
> With the boys who drove the oxen.[35]

No one remained idle. "The whole colony," wrote Eric Johnson, "resembled the industriousness a beehive from the early morning until late in the evening."[36] Looms and spinning wheels, being in short supply, were operated in shifts day and night; one visitor tells of sleeping to the "sweet lullaby" of "industry"—the spinning wheel in an adjoining room.[37] During the harvest of 1849 the colonists attempted to wield the grain cradles around the clock. "But when they made the observation that the next day health was affected, they [worked] instead eighteen hours a day." [38] One should not conclude, however, that the colonists were ascetics or drudges by the standards of their time. As Michael Mikkelsen, who took the opportunity of interviewing some of the original colonists, summarized it:

> No one was obliged to overtax his strength. Each one was put to the work for which he was best adapted . . .. On the whole, the members of the community enjoyed a greater amount of comfort and security against want than the struggling pioneer settlers by whom they were surrounded.[39]

It is also worth noting that the communal setting allows for a sense of camaraderie in work, since, as one colony descendent put it, "Each and every one knew that he worked for the welfare of the society."[40] A colonist's letter to relatives in Sweden explains, "I work with many dear brothers, and one encourages the other with God's words."[41] The following passage from Mikkelsen conveys a sense not only of the organization of work in the colony, but of the exuberance sometimes present in communal enterprise:

> The young man wielded the cradles—and wonderful feats were performed with the cradle in those days—while the middle-aged men and the women bound the sheaves; boys and girls gathered the sheaves together, while the old men placed them in shocks. In the evening, when the day's work was done and the harvesters were retiring from the field, an interesting spectacle presented itself to the observer. Two by two, in a long procession a couple of hundred strong, the harvesters wended their homeward way, first the men carrying their cradle-scythes over their shoulders, then the women with their handrakes, and, finally, the children, all singing some merry harvest-song of their native country, while keeping step to the music. On arriving at the village they repaired to the common dining hall [in Big Brick], where a bountiful repast awaited them on long wooden tables, some of which were set aside for the men, others for the women, and still others for the children.[42]

Judging from the testimony of colonists, visitors and oral historians, high worker morale seems to have been one of the advantages of the communal system. One visitor describes the colony's communalism as "an industrial socialism, founded on virtue and morality; which lightens their labor, and sanctifies their toil."[43] Stoneberg concluded from his extensive interviews with colonists that:

This is a building in the northeastern part of Bishop Hill that was constructed in 1855. The walls of the main structure were erected with bricks from the colony's kilns. Named the Dairy Building, it served as a residence for the colony's milkmaids who probably also used the structure as a place to process the milk they obtained from the colony's large herd of dairy cows.

"If the work was trying, it also had its sweet sides. It was a large family who lived together; the daily intercourse within it was not without pleasure."[44] Although accounts of life in Bishop Hill give little evidence of "leisure" activities or the pursuit of pleasure for its own sake, they leave the reader with an impression of daily life as filled with relatively satisfying work that was sanctified by religious devotion and a spirit of camaraderie.

Although dining was communal, the Janssonists unlike many communal groups retained the family as an important part of communal life. Indeed it was extended family ties, in large part, that brought members into the Janssonist movement and the subsequent emigration, and these ties probably played a role in keeping people in the community. There were times of celibacy, when new marriages were forbidden and married couples were supposed to refrain from sexual activity. The first, which is relatively well documented, was in 1846-48, evidently for practical reasons when the colony could ill afford to raise children. Yielding to pressure from the younger colonists, Jansson reversed the policy dramatically in the summer of 1848, pairing off couples "regardless of personal likes or dislikes" and marrying them in group ceremonies.[45] The second period of celibacy may have occurred in the middle of the next decade, when some influential leaders reportedly tried to impose the Shaker's doctrine on the community; however, colony records make no mention of the policy and there is conflicting testimony as to whether it was ever enforced.

Even during times of celibacy, married couples and nuclear families always occupied private quarters. The pattern of private family dwellings and communal dining is clearly reflected in colony architecture; many of the buildings are devoted to single-family apartments without cooking arrangments. The largest of these, Big Brick, was two hundred feet long and four stories high, with ninety-six family rooms and communal dining halls. "Each household occupies a large room," reports an 1859 visitor, "in which the furniture is attractive and comfortable."[46]

In the beginning the diet was scant, particularly before the first harvest, when Jansson often commanded days of fasting (ostensibly for reasons of spiritual discipline).[47] The fare in those early days consisted of corn mush with watered-down milk and a thin hard-tack made from corn. As the colony grew more prosperous the quantity and variety of food greatly improved. Throughout the colony period, however, the people maintained a taste for simple traditional foods. These included polsa (a sausage or scrapple of grain and meat), blood pudding with milk sauce, wheat hardbread, cheese, potatoes, pancakes, soup, milk, butter (usually a Sunday treat), bean and meat soup, corn pudding, smoked herring or ham, beef, and fresh or salted fish. A non-alcoholic "small beer" from the colony brewery was taken with meals, and both children and adults were served coffee. On holidays special "feasts" were prepared that included pastries, puddings, pies and other treats.[48] Letters to Sweden frequently mention the abundance and quality of food, commenting on the size of the coffee cups and other details: "We eat only bread made of wheat—big piles of it as in a party in Nora."[49]

Food prepared in outlying buildings was brought to the dining halls in Big Brick, where men and women sat at separate tables in one room and children were served in another. Eighteen people prepared food in the kitchens, while

Bishop Hill, interior furnishings.

twelve served at the tables.[50] Anders Wiberg, visiting in 1853, observed that "An Ample meal is taken at a well and attractively served table, with great order and silence among both old and young."[51] In 1859, a visitor from the Icarian colony at Nauvoo, Illinois wrote that "The dining hall is clean; the tables are covered with white table-cloths; the plates and dishes are of porcelain, the glasses shining, etc. The food is good; about 500 persons can eat together in the dining hall."[52] At the tables the boys and men took the lead in saying grace, and the voices of the women and girls led the people in prayerful song. A reporter from the *Geneseo Republican* was moved to purple prose by the scene:

> Three to four hundred of both sexes seated on either side of snowy-white-arched columns, no noise, nor confusion. Hark again! slowly, and lowly at first, presently as with one voice upwards and heaven-wards swells that hymn of praise, and your soul with it, if you have one that is ever capable of rising above this groveling world. . ..[53]

Breakfast was taken first thing in the morning, dinner at noon, supper at four and an "evening meal" at six.[54]

"As for clothes," wrote the same colonist, "we get garments as needed." "The tailor and the shoemaker work in their shops as fast as they can, so there is no shortage of wearing apparel."[55] Women sewed their own clothing from colony cloth, and men's clothes were made to order. Every person was allowed two suits of clothing per year, along with one pair each of boots and shoes made to individual measurements. The custom-fitted clothing gave the colonists "a neat, well-dressed look in any gathering."[56] Clothing remained simple and traditional: women wore blue drilling on work days and calico on Sundays; men dressed in wool or jeans and wore their hair long. Despite the general uniformity of dress, the colony did not formally adopt a mandatory costume.[57]

The colonists' material needs were simple and well provided for. Food and clothing were ample. If one became ill, the colony had the only hospital in the region (and thus used by some non-colonists as well). At the end of life, funeral expenses and burial plots were provided by the community. One colonist wrote to his family in Sweden relinquishing his inheritance to his mother, "Since God so richly cares for me both with clothing and food."[58]

Although they were known for book-burnings in Sweden, the Janssonists in America had a strong commitment to basic education. Even during the first horrid winter an American teacher was hired for the children. Anders Larsson reported the following June that: "All the children go to school and study English, in which a large number are already well-advanced. . .." He also noted that Jansson had just given his first sermon in English, and that twelve "apostles" chosen to spread the faith had done nothing since autumn but study the language.[59] Unlike most of the German communal groups the Janssonists were eager to assimilate. Instead of learning Swedish, the school children memorized the names of American presidents and the counties of Illinois.[60] School was held first in the dugouts, then in the colony church, the steeple building, and finally in a building designated as the colony schoolhouse. Education, however, stopped at age fourteen, and the Janssonists eschewed higher learning as leading to excessive pride. Of reading materials, only school books, the Bible, and the Janssonist catechism and hymnbooks were to be found.[61]

From the days of the tent church until the formal dissolution of the colony, religious services were a prominent part of everyday life. While testimony as to

the length and frequency of worship services is somewhat contradictory, meetings of about two hours' duration were typically held before breakfast and after the evening meal, with an additional afternoon meeting on Sundays." The meetings seem to have been curtailed during the busiest agricultural seasons. Coming as they did from a pietist background that stressed individual religious devotion over church authority, the Janssonists had no formally recognized clergy. Although Jansson and his close associates—particularly Jonas Olsson—took a leading role in the services, many others were allowed to preach in keeping with their belief, as reported by Larsson, that "all (as they say) are taught by God and thus cannot speak any other word than that which God places in their mouths."[62] In addition to the Bible, Jansson's catechism and hymnbook were used in the services. After Jansson's death, Jonas Olsson quietly put Jansson's catechism aside but continued to preach the Janssonist doctrine of sinless perfectionism. In 1859 the *Revue Icarienne* characterized the sermons as "frightful pompous nonsense" but praised the "beautiful and practiced voices coming from beneath the simple cotton kerchiefs" of the colony girls as they sang from Jansson's hymnal.

Most writers on Bishop Hill seem to agree with Eric Johnson's view that the extreme religious fervor of the original Janssonist movement cooled during the fifties as people became more oriented toward material success.[63] Nevertheless, the religious aura of the colony remained a source of great personal satisfaction for many, including the new arrivals who wrote to Sweden.[64] Anders Andersson observed in January, 1855: "When it comes to religion, we have so much of it that it is like a stream that never dries up. I wish you could hear such preaching in Sweden. It goes through bone and marrow." And Lars Ersson wrote shortly afterwards, on May 21: "All we have to do is to work quietly, each one in his call of duty, and listen to our teachers preaching. We let the words rankle in our minds until they start to grow and bear fruit in our hearts."

What significance did the communal system hold for the colonists? Some have said that they adopted communalism only as a temporary expedient, always intending to divide the property as soon as it became practical to do so.[65] Anna Maria Strålle, one of Jansson's earliest and closest followers, wrote in an 1872 letter:

> . . .for each one of us individually to construct a home with the few assets we had brought over after paying for the trip was an impossibility. We decided thus to build and farm in common . . . this communality would continue according to what Eric Jansson often said, until we had recovered to the point that we could, without damage to each other, divide up into our own homes.[66]

Eric Johnson, writing in 1880, confirmed that his father had viewed communalism only as a "temporary arrangement" and that "there was no intention of founding the colony on a socialistic basis."[67]

One might assume that such unequivocal testimony from Jansson's son and a long-time follower would settle the question, but it is not so simple as that. The above statements, made long after the fact, reflect a complex interplay of partisan views. The last days of the colony were characterized by a bitter dispute between the anti-communalists and the pro-communalists, the latter siding with trustee Jonas Olsson. Johnson, who was only ten at the time of his father's death, tended in later years to view the trustees as self-interested usurpers whose advocacy of the communal system subverted his father's intentions—a theme

developed in his *Svenskarne i Illinois,* from which the above quote was taken. Strålle might have held a similar view, and like Johnson she may have wished to protect Jansson's reputation in a cultural milieu generally unsympathetic to communalism. It is probably no coincidence that Ernst Olsson, an anti-Janssonist, rejected the communalism-as-temporary argument in his *History of the Swedes of Illinois,* and sided instead with a recollection by Norelius (another anti-Janssonist) that the Janssonists favored "Christian communism" even before the emigration.[68]

One can never know Jansson's original intentions, and even if they were known, one could not rule out the possibility of multiple, changing,or ambivalent views within the community. In fact, Eric Johnson's argument might well be that, rather than having a definite plan to terminate communalism, his father simply had—to use Johnson's own words—"no plan, no system concerning the colony."[69] Even Johnson admitted, however, that as "One brick building after another sprang up and everything was otherwise improved, . . . it began to become a wholly satisfactory communal life that they led," and thus the trustees saw fit to embrace the communal life formally in the colony charter of 1853.[70]

Johnson was certainly right about the charter: it clearly institutionalized communalism, cited its religious justification and spelled out its practical outlines. It made no mention whatsoever of plans to divide property at a future time. And it was signed by virtually all the adult colonists, although Mikkelsen claimed (for reasons not made clear) that they did not understand it.[71] However, there is a flaw in the argument that the idea of an enduring communal system occurred to the trustees only after the buildings "sprang up" and a viable communalism had somehow evolved helter-skelter. The architecture of Bishop Hill reflects an enormous, largely irreversible, and apparently premeditated investment in communal life, and one that began during Jansson's lifetime.

When Anders Larsson visited the colony the first spring, he saw surveyors laying out a town site "in the shape of a square, with eighteen houses on each side . . ."[72] The buildings, which were supposed to be identical in all dimensions, might have been adaptable either to communal or family living. However, this plan was never carried out. Instead, the community built bigger structures full of one-room family quarters lacking kitchens. The largest of these was Big Brick, which contained ninety-six family rooms in addition to the huge communal dining halls, and which was surrounded by specialized support buildings (bakery, brewery, meat house and kitchens). The north half of this megalithic structure was begun in 1849 and completed in time for Jansson to take up residence there prior to his death, and the remainder was finished in 1851.[73] Perhaps the largest dormitory building in any American communal settlement, Big Brick was clearly not designed for private residential use. It and other colony buildings lacked storage cellars, kitchens and other features needed in private dwellings, a circumstance which proved of great inconvenience to residents of those buildings after the breakup of the commune—and which led to structurally compromising modifications of some buildings after colony times. Why, if a division of property were the goal, would the colonists have invested so much of their resources in buildings suitable only for communal living?

It is not far-fetched to envision a gradual turn toward communalism. Such was the path followed by many of the German pietists including the Rappites,

Big Brick, as seen from the north. The Steeple Building is visible in the background. Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

Bishop Hill, Administration Building. This structure faces the town square in Bishop Hill. It was constructed in 1856 and served as the colony's administration building. The building material was bricks produced in the colony's kilns, although the walls are now covered by a stucco. Here the colony's Board of Trustees attended to the business affairs of the community.

Zoarites, and Amana colonists, all of whom adopted communalism as an expedient during emigration and later embraced it as an article of faith. The theology was right: Jansson's perfectionism, which maintained that the saved could lead sinless lives, is reminiscent of beliefs associated with other utopian groups. And whether or not one accepts the argument that the Janssonists may have been influenced by Fourier, Saint-Simon, and other European socialist thinkers discussed in Swedish newspapers of the time it is clear that in America they were well aware of other communal experiments—particularly the Shakers at Pleasant Hill, with whom they carried on active communication.[74] Isaksson speculates that communication with these other communal societies "may . . . have convinced Eric Jansson of the advantages of such a system," and he went on to suggest that the desire for personal control over colony affairs (which Johnson recognizes as a motive for the trustees) might have swayed Jansson toward communalism.[75] It has even been suggested that the Janssonists longed to restore certain communal aspects of traditional rural village life whose passing had left them in a state of distress, and thus they "came from Sweden to return to communal village life."[76]

Some writers seem eager to celebrate Bishop Hill's later rejection of communalism as proof of the odiousness of all forms of collective life. To be sure, the colonists did eventually decide to end the communal system, and many of those who previously left the colony probably did so because of their opposition to communalism. On the other hand, it would be too simplistic to represent Bishop Hill's communal life as an oppressive burden imposed on the long-suffering colonists by fanatical or cynical leaders. Even Captain Johnson, who saw the communal system as a temporary expedient, nevertheless linked it to sincere convictions of Christian love and noble fellowship. A recently published collection of colonists' letters to Nora parish contains repeated references to the communal nature of the colony.[77] None are critical of communal life; rather, the attitudes seem to range from matter-of-fact to decidely righteous:

> Now you can visualize that in worldly matters we are all the same both rich and poor (Lars Ersson, May 21, 1855)
>
> The Americans come here in droves to see how we have it, and it surprises them that we can live together like this (Eric Olsson, October 9, 1851).
>
> On the lower level [of Big Brick] is the kitchen where all of us eat, everyone with no exception, both high and low. Whether we are poor or rich, we are equal . . .. If [those who charge high prices for commodities] saw to their soul's salvation, they would work in a colony where everything is owned jointly (Eric Olsson, May 31, 1851).
>
> Here among us we are many enough to cheer each other . . .. We have . . . been spared from worries about our bodily well being . . . by dividing all work among us (Jöns and Olaf Andersson, Feb. 1, 1853).

Of course, these statements should be understood in their context, since the clear intent of most of the letters is the vindication of Janssonism and the condemnation of its opponents. "One colonist glibly informed her loved ones in Sweden, "I have been thrown as a sparkle from the fire which is the horrible sinful lives you all live" (Anna Ersdotter, May 16, 1851). "Do not keep anyone from reading this letter," admonishes another, "because I am doomed if I do not blow the trumpets when I see the sword over the land" (Eric Olsson, May 31, 1851).

Even at the end, the Janssonists did not rise as one to throw off the yoke of communal sharing. On the contrary, there is evidence that attitudes were deeply divided as the colony stood on the brink of dissolution. The history of the colony written by the anonymous "Settler," which appeared in serial form in the *Henry County Chronicle* in 1860, described the factions in the still unresolved question of communalism:

> The "reform" [anti-communalist] party, took the ground, that their mode of life, could never admit of individual refinement and intellectual development, and consequently, the Colony, in its social literary and religious character, would and could not keep pace with the age in which they lived . . .. About one-third of the Colonists, advocate the new order of things, and in my opinion are pursuing the course that will lead to the fuller development of the mind . . ..
>
> It is believed by many, however, that the most piety, adheres to the party, consisting of two-thirds of the whole, who are desirous of continuing, and are determined to continue, as nearly as possible, the former order of things. I believe the intention of the two-thirds, is to so arrange their real property, that each member shall know what belongs to him and can legally dispose of it, whenever he pleases; and yet, they intend to live and work very much as they now do, considering their property for all practical purposes, as owned in common.[78]

It is not clear how the anti-communal faction, which by this account was distinctly in the minority, managed to prevail. The record does show, however, that upon the dissolution of the colony 265 shares of the property went to Jonas Olsson's conservative faction and only 150 shares were given to Olof Johnson's anti-communal faction.[79] Not surprisingly, the Olsson party lagged two or three years behind the other in the dividing of property.[80]

Certain questions have often arisen in connection with Bishop Hill's communal lifestyle: Why did it exist? Was it a success or a failure? Was it to be temporary or permanent? Was it valued and satisfying in itself, or merely tolerated as a means to an end? We must bear in mind, when considering such issues, that societies are composed of individuals who are ambivalent, ambiguous, diverse and changeable. For many who told their stories, the communal way of life seems to have been rewarding in itself, at least for a time. For others, many of whom left Bishop Hill and took their stories with them, it may have been otherwise. Brief glimpses of the colony's psychological landscape reach us across the barrier of time, while the subtler nuances, wherein the answers to these questions truly lie, remain beyond our grasp.

NOTES

[1]For a recent general survey of Bishop Hill history and scholarship, see the author's "Communal Life in the Bishop Hill Colony," in Donald E. Pitzer, ed., *America's Communal Utopias: The Developmental Process* (University of Wisconsin Press, in press)

[2]Anonymous "Settler," *Henry County Chronicle*, Jan. 24, 1860; Olof Isaksson, *Bishop Hill: A Utopia on the Prairie* (Stockholm: LT Publishing House, 1969), p. 55.

[3]Philip J. Stoneberg, "The Bishop Hill Colony" In Henry L. Kiner, *History of Henry County, Illinois* (Chicago, The Pioneer Publishing Company, 1910), p. 630.

[4]Eric Johnson, *The History of the Bishop Hill Colony* (Translation of pp. 22-54 of Eric Johnson and C.F. Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois,* Chicago: W. Williamson, 1880) Unpublished manuscript 1978, Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection, p. 10.

[5]Olov Isaksson and Sören Hallgren, *Bishop Hill: A Utopia on the Prairie* (Stockholm: LT Publishing House, 1969), p. 53; Carolyn Anderson Wilson, *"Revitalization, Emigration, and Social Organization: An Ethnohistorical Study of the Bishop Hill Colony, 1846-1861"* (Honors Thesis, Knox College, 1973), p. 66 and appendix.

[6]Ronald E. Nelson, *"The Role of Colonies in the Pioneer Settlement of Henry County, Illinois"* (University of Nebraska PhD Dissertation, 1969), p. 137.

[7]Johnson, pp. 11-13; Philip J. Stoneberg interview with John Helsen (Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection).

[8]John E. Norton, "For it Flows with Milk and Honey: Two Immigrant Letters About Bishop Hill," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly*, Vol. XXIV, July 1973.

[9]"Colony Charter and By-Laws" as quoted in Michael A. Mikkelsen, *The Bishop Hill Colony: A Religious Communistic Settlement in Henry County, Illinois* (Philadelphia, Porcupine Press, 1972 [facsimile reprint of Series 10, No. 1 of *Johns Hopkins Studies in Historical and Political Science,* 1892]), appendix; and preamble to the charter on microfilm, "Records and Papers in the Custody of E. Hedstrom," Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection.

[10]Mikkelsen, pp. 36-37.

[11]Mikkelsen, p. 35.

[12]Norton, "For it Flows with Milk and Honey . . .," p. 175.

[13]Philip J. Stoneberg, "The Bishop Hill Colony" in Henry L. Kiner, *History of Henry County, Illinois* (Chicago: The Pioneer Publishing Company, 1910), p. 645; John E. Norton, *"This Land Flows of Milk and Honey: A Documentary Survey of Pioneering Agriculture at the Swedish Colony of Bishop Hill, Illinois, 1846-1854"* (ms. Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection, 1972), p. 14; John E. Norton, "Anders Wiberg's Account of a trip to the United States in 1852-1853," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly*, April, 1978, p. 105; "The Bishop Hill Colony," *Revue Icarienne*, Feb. 1, 1859 (Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection); C. Wilson, p. 85.

[14]Norton, "For it Flows with Milk and Honey . . ..," pp. 169-170.

[15]Mikkelsen, p. 35.

[16]Norton, *This Land Flows of Milk and Honey. . ..*, p. 34.

[17]Isaksson, p. 85.

[18]Johnson, pp. 19-20.

[19]Nelson, p. 169-70.

[20]Mikkelsen, pp. 52-53.

[21]John Swainson, quoted in Mikkelsen, p. 54.

[22]J. Hiram Wilson, *"Property as a Social Institution in the Bishop Hill Colony: An Ethnohistorical Study"* (Honors Thesis, Knox College, 1973), p. 64.

[23]John E. Norton, "Anders Wiberg's Account of a Trip to the United States in 1852-1853" *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* (April, 1978), 107.

[24]p. 106.

[25]Translated in J. H. Wilson, p. 35.

[26]Minnie C. Norlin, *Karin* (1936, publisher unknown; Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection), p. 29.

[27]Paul Elmen, *Wheat Flour Messiah* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1976), p. 148; Mikkelsen, p. 53; C. Wilson, pp. 67 and 72 and appendix; John E. Norton, *"The Causes, Structure and Impact of the Janssonist Emigration from Sweden, 1846-1850"* (ms. Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection), p. 26.

[28]Norlin, p. 29.

[29]Stoneberg Interviews, Helen Lindwall 2/3/08, Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection.

[30]Norlin, p. 27.

[31]Johnson, p. 19.

[32]"Child-Life in the Bishop Hill Colony" *The Geneseo Republican,* October 11, 1907.

[33]Stoneberg Interviews, J. P. Chaiser 9/28/08, Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection.

[34]Stoneberg Interviews, J. P. Chaiser 9/23/08, Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection.

[35]Theodore J. Anderson, *100 years: A History of Bishop Hill, Illinois* (Chicago: Theo G. [sic] Anderson, n.d. [ca. 1946]) p. 243.

[36]p. 19

[37]Norton, "Anders Wiberg's Account . . ..," p. 109.

[38]Johnson, p. 20.

[39]p. 58.

[40]P. J. Stoneberg, quoted in J. H. Wilson, p. 35.

[41]Lilly Setterdahl, "Emigrant Letters by Bishop Hill Colonists from Nora Parish," *Western Illinois Regional Studies"* 1 No. 2 (Fall, 1978), 121-75

[42]Mikkelsen, p. 34. This is virtually a translation, unfortunately not acknowledged, from a passage in Captain Eric Johnson (Johnson and Peterson, *Svenskarne i Illinois);* cf. Carolyn Wilson's less elegant but serviceable translation of the original (Johnson, *op. cit.,* p. 20).

[43]Norton, "Anders Wiberg's Account. . ..," p. 109.

[44]quoted in J. H. Wilson, p. 35.

[45]Stoneberg, p. 637.

[46]*Revue Icarienne.*

[47]Norton, "For it Flows with Milk and Honey," p. 173; Translation of letter from Lars Lindbeck to Philip Stoneberg, 6/2/08, Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection.

[48]"Child-Life in the Bishop Hill Colony"; Stoneberg, p. 635; Norton, *This Land Flows of Milk and Honey,* p. 12-13.

[49]Setterdahl Letters, Lars Ersson 5/21/55.

[50]Mikkelsen, pp. 54-55.

[51]Norton, "Anders Wiberg's Account. . ..," pp. 104-105.

[52]*Revue Icarienne,* February 1, 1859.

[53]Norton, "Anders Wiberg's Account. . ..," p. 109.

[54]Setterdahl Letters, Lars Ersson 5/21/55.

[55]Ibid.

[56]Norlin, p. 29.

[57]*Revue Icarienne*; Mikkelsen p. 55.

[58]Setterdahl Letters, Jöns Olsson 7/1/52.

[59]Norton, "For it Flows with Milk and Honey . . ..," pp. 175, 172.

[60]"Child-Life"

[61]Mikkelsen, p. 57, "Child-Life. . ..," *Revue Icarienne.*

[62]*Norton, "For it Flows with Milk and Honey. . ..," p. 174.*

[63]*p. 32.*

[64]*Setterdahl Letters.*

[65]*e.g., Jansson's biographer Paul Elmen draws this conclusion from Strålle's statement, below, and goes on to state (quite incorrectly) that communalism was abandoned in 1853 (p. 129).*

[66]*Norton, Causes. . .of the Janssonist Emigration,* addendum.

[67]Isaksson, pp. 123-126.

[68](Chicago: Engberg-Holmberg Publishing Co., 1908), pp. 221-222.

[69]Johnson, p. 27.

[70]Johnson, pp. 27-28.

[71]p. 51.

[72]Norton, "For it Flows with Milk and Honey. . .," p. 169.

[73]John E. Norton, *"Bishop Hill: The Building of Utopia"* (ms. Bishop Hill Archive and Research Collection, 1972), p. 25.

[74]*Ibid,* p. 7; Hiram Bigelow, *"The Bishop Hill Colony," Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society,* No. 7 (1902), 103.

[75]p. 126.

[76]C. Wilson, pp. 21-23, 61-77, 97. For further discussion of "village collectivism" see Charles Nelson, *"A Socio-Cultural Interpretation of a Protestant Religious Movement: The Case of the Eric Janssonists of 19th Century Sweden."* (Unpublished PhD Dissertation, New School of Social Research, 1974), pp. 84-85, 215.

[77]Setterdahl Letters.

[78]October 6, 1860.

[79]C. Wilson, p. 90.

[80]Hiram Bigelow, p. 107.

THE FOLK GENRE PAINTINGS OF OLOF KRANS AS HISTORICAL DOCUMENTS

Elise Schebler Dawson

The folk art of Olof Krans is familiar both to scholars and amateur historians. Of particular interest are his genre paintings of Bishop Hill, Illinois, a Swedish communal colony of the mid-nineteenth century.[1] The people of Bishop Hill and the historical organizations in the community accept Krans's paintings as accurate historical documents. However, the validity of the paintings as documents has not been systematically tested against other sources of historical information. Consequently, a detailed analysis of the historical accuracy of his genre paintings would serve to test the assumptions of folk art historians as well as scholars interested in the Bishop Hill community.

This paper will discuss the accuracy of Krans's artistic endeavors in seven paintings from his Bishop Hill series: "Sowing the Seeds," "Plows on the Hillside and Furrows Long, Colonists toiling with Oxen Strong," "Women in a Row, the Corn to Plant," "Cradling the Grain," "Pitching the Hay to Beat the Rain," "Bishop Hill as Seen from North of the Edwards in 1855," and "Building a Bridge to a Dra-Slapp Chant."[2]

Olof Krans came to Bishop Hill with his parents in 1850, when he was twelve years old. He worked as an ox boy when he was young and in other colony industries as he grew older. Krans left Bishop Hill in 1861 to become a soldier during the Civil War. After his discharge from the army he moved to Galesburg, twenty-five miles south of Bishop Hill and, later, to Galva, six miles east of the colony. Krans began his artistic career as a house and sign painter but he was also interested in oil painting and produced a large quantity of work in that medium during his lifetime. He copied some of his paintings from other painter's work but many were original scenes painted from his own experiences.

Krans executed most of the paintings in the Bishop Hill series in 1896 for the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the colony. The exception was "Bishop Hill as seen from North of the Edwards in 1855," a 1911 copy of an auditorium curtain he painted for the community in 1895. Krans painted the series from memory with the aid of friends, relatives, and photographs.

In this study Krans's work will be tested for accuracy in three major areas: physical features of Bishop Hill and the surrounding prairie; visual depiction

Olof Olsson Krans from Salja, Nora.
Courtesy of the Illinois Department of Conservation

of work processes, such as plowing, planting and harvesting; and the documentation of artifactual details, including clothing and implements. The analysis itself is based upon the following sources: transcriptions of oral history interviews with former colonists, original correspondence and business papers from the Bishop Hill colony, published contemporary descriptions of the colony by visitors, extant artifacts, and a variety of secondary sources on Bishop Hill, Olof Krans, and communal societies.

PHYSICAL FEATURES OF BISHOP HILL

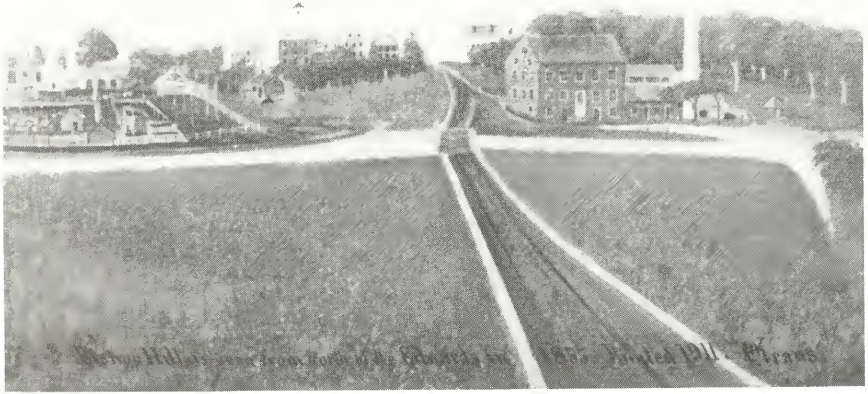
Analysis of the physical setting for the Krans paintings is two-fold: evaluation of the lay of the land and then a discussion of the depicted structures. The setting of each painting will be compared to contemporary descriptions, current and immediate post-colony photographs, and surviving buildings.

When viewing lay of the land in the Krans paintings, the first thing one notices is the division between earth and sky. Approximately one-half of his painting is sky; the horizon line is fairly uncluttered and the effect promotes the feeling that the prairie extends endlessly. Few trees or bushes appear and instead there are rolling hills of grass and soil.

Bishop Hill is situated on the Illinois prairie, and the gently rolling hills are usually devoid of trees, which only grow near lakes and rivers. The paintings of Bishop Hill, though, show that it is in a grove of trees. A letter written in 1847 substantiates this by stating, "Their town is situated in a little grove called Hoop-Pole grove . . .."[3] The explanation is simple. Bishop Hill is located directly south of the Edwards River and has a natural spring running through it with enough water to promote growth of trees without any human intervention.

In the painting "Bishop Hill as seen from North of the Edwards in 1855," Krans provides in effect a map of the colony showing the location of the Edwards River, a farm, mill, church, and administrative buildings. Towards the foreground of the work runs the river and directly on the river is located a large building which is most likely the saw mill. Anders Wiberg, a Swede who toured the United States in 1852 noted, "A creek runs through the site, on which there is a saw mill and linen mill . . .."[4] The saw mill, which was operated by steam was completed by 1851.[5] The date of 1852 was reported by another colonist for the construction of a four story brick steam mill.[6] The mill in the painting is four stories high, and is painted red, the usual color of bricks made in the colony.

On the left side of the painting is a farm and hog yard. The colony owned and operated several such farms that lay on the outskirts of town and others that were located further away. The colonists used the northern part of town, which lies along the Edwards River, as the colony stockyard. According to an individual who identified herself only as "An Old Settler," a cow pasture existed opposite the Colony Church, located to the right in the painting.[7] Colonists interviewed by Philip Stoneberg in the early twentieth century supported the idea that they kept livestock in this area but did not specifically place hogs in this particular barnyard. It is not, however, inconceivable for hogs to be located here since the land could adequately support them. The same barnyard complete with hogs appears in the painting "Building a Bridge" (not shown). Typical farms



Bishop Hill as seen from north of the Edwards in 1855.
Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

in Bishop Hill included a barn or animal shelter, a dwelling for humans, and a farmyard with outbuildings, all painted here.

Five red buildings are located at the center of the painting. These are the Dairy Building, the Blacksmith Shop, the Carriage and Wagon Shop, the Steeple Building and the Colony Store. The Dairy Building, erected in 1855, is a brick structure standing two and one-half stories high, as it is depicted here.

The Steeple Building, built in 1854, is a three story Greek Revival structure, with a clock tower two stories high. A hip roof had been added in 1869, but prior to that addition the roof was flat. The building is constructed of red brick and covered by a cream-colored stucco, with the exception of the north side, which remains red brick. The building in Krans's painting is flat roofed, has a two-story clock tower and is painted red on the north side and cream on the visible east side.

Directly in front of the Steeple Building the artist depicted two small buildings. The smaller one is the Wagon Shop, a two and one-half story brick structure built in 1851. The larger of the buildings appears to be the Blacksmith Shop, which he has also painted as a two and one-half story brick building. Records list two different dates for the construction of the Blacksmith Shop, 1854 and 1857. The second date is two years later than the date the painting represents. When the Bishop Hill Heritage Association restored the Blacksmith Shop the workers discovered that the building was originally one and one-half stories, with a story added later.[8] This fact could explain the two dates given for the building's construction, the 1857 date marking the addition of the extra story.

The fifth brick building in this painting is the Colony Store, built in 1853. It is painted as a brick, Greek Revival structure standing two and one-half stories high. The store Krans painted looks very similar to the store still standing today.

The remaining building in the painting is the Colony Church, built in 1848. It is, with the exception of the Hospital, the only large timber building constructed in the colony.[9] The church has two stories and a gambrel roof, and is painted white. Timber was scarce on the prairies and few large buildings were constructed of wood. One colonist noted that: "There are also other assets at Bishop Hill. We have a limestone quarry and can build houses of brick."[10] Thus the colonists solved the problem of timber shortage when they learned to make bricks and their architecture reflected this adaptation.

These are the only buildings Krans depicts in this particular painting. There were several other major buildings at this time, all built of brick, except the Hospital. These structures include the Colony Hotel and Big Brick, a residential building. However, from the direction of this view it is possible that the buildings were hidden by the trees. Krans may also have felt that they were not as important or less interesting. Perhaps he just forgot they were there.

In general, Krans was very accurate in his depictions, with his only discrepancy being the portrayal of the Blacksmith Shop. There seems to be no special reason for portraying the shop in its 1857 form but Krans painted from memory and photographs forty years later and so this could well account for his confusion about the form of the building. The remaining buildings and landscape are as accurate in detail as the style of his work will allow.

VISUAL DEPICTION OF WORK PROCESS

The majority of paintings in the Bishop Hill series show people involved in some type of work. Stoneberg obtained oral histories concerning these procedures from former colonists. There are a few letters to Sweden from colonists describing their duties. Detailed descriptions also exist in several secondary sources. All can be used to check Krans's accuracy.

Many of these work assignments were accomplished in large workgroups consisting primarily of adults. The people of the colony first began working together under the supervision of Eric Jansson. A woman who later left the colony recalled:

> It was quite impossible for each of us, separately, to cultivate the sod and build homes with the few things we had at our disposal when the costs of our journey had been paid. We decided therefore, to build and cultivate the soil in common, and this was to continue, according to what Eric Jansson often said, until we had progressed so far that we could, without harming each other, divide ourselves into homes of our own.[11].

After Jansson was killed in 1850 a Board of Trustees cared for the colony. In order to continue the communal aspect they resolved "to put all our property together, and all should have an equal and common interest therein."[12] Since the people were indeed working together at the time Krans lived in the colony he was able to witness the communal spirit first hand.

One other aspect to consider in exploring Krans's portrayal of work process is that he painted almost entirely agricultural scenes and ignored work in the mills, shops, and store. The colony charter stated: "The Business of said Corporation shall be manufacturing, milling, all kinds of mechanical business, agriculture and merchandising."[13] By painting predominantly agricultural processes Krans presented only one side of colony work life, so any evaluation with regard to work process is limited. Why Krans painted agricultural scenes is difficult to explain. It could result simply from a type of nostalgia, a desire for a simpler, more agrarian society. It could be that be did most of his own work in agriculture. Many of Krans's paintings, other than the Bishop Hill series, are outdoor scenes and so it is not surprising that he painted this motif about Bishop Hill.

Krans portrayed the agricultural cycle, from plowing through harvesting. Plowing scenes occur in two paintings. It is the major emphasis, for example, in "Plows on the Hillside" and a secondary focus in "Sowing the Seeds." The first painting shows two work groups plowing long furrows. They are apparently working in an uncultivated area thus the term "Breaking Prairie." Each work group consists of three men and six yoke of oxen (twelve oxen total). One man is guiding the plow and the two other men are driving the oxen.

Breaking the Illinois prairie was very difficult work indeed. The rich loam stuck to the plow share and the farmer needed strong animals to pull the heavy plow. When the colonists came to western Illinois the area had been open for settlement about thirty years but much land was still unsettled. Furthermore, Jansson had deliberately sought an isolated and unsettled area so the land they obtained was unbroken and wild.

Reports from colonists on the prairie-breaking procedure vary. One remembered that they used three yoke of oxen and a twenty-inch plow.[14] Another source claimed that "When the prairie land was first broken, a thirty-six inch

plow pulled by eight oxen was used. Later a smaller plow was used, drawn by three yoke of oxen."[15] A secondary source reported that "The first year 350 acres of sod were broken with a thirty-six inch plow drawn by eight yoke of oxen."[16] For a final piece of evidence was offered by another member of Bishop Hill: "We used to have three or four yoke of oxen on the plows."[17] From this evidence it seems that they used either a twenty-inch or thirty-six-inch plow and that from three to eight yoke of oxen were employed.

Krans did not arrive in the colony until three or four years after the initial prairie breaking. It is possible that he saw the breaking of some outlying fields but he left no written account. He painted six yoke of oxen in this piece, either two to three yoke too many or one yoke too few, according to the preceding sources. Krans is not accountable for the exact numbers because the evidence is too inconsistent. He has shown that they used several teams. Accounts do not mention the number of people involved in this work. Krans used three, an appropriate choice, one to guide the plow, one to drive the oxen and the third for a large team and to provide relief for the other men.

Plowing is a secondary focus in the painting "Sowing the Seeds." The plows are located above the sowers on the horizon line at the center of the painting. They are obviously plowing land that was cultivated the year before. Since the colonists broke the first ground for planting in the spring of 1847 the earliest season this painting can represent is the spring of 1848. Krans painted seven teams of plows all of which appear to be following each other. Because of the artistic problems with perspective in his paintings it is possible that they are intended to be plowing several rows apart. The work groups consist of a man, a plow, and two horses or mules.

Again, sources produce conflicting reports. One colonist stated that they used one yoke of oxen when plowing broken ground.[18] Another source said that they used horses for this task but does not give a specific number of horses.[19] Since there is no record of mules being used it is most probable that the animals Krans depicted are horses. It is very likely that the colonists did use oxen at first because of their availability and strength. Later they used horses, which replaced oxen for this type of work. Research has not uncovered a record of the number of plowing teams that might be in one field. Because they worked communally it is possible that several teams were together in one field. The sowers may have walked just behind the plows allowing the job to proceed more quickly. The plowman did not need a large team of horses to accommodate the smaller plow used on soil previously cultivated.

The next agricultural process is planting and Krans painted two pictures illustrating this activity, one for corn and one for another grain. "Women in a Row" shows corn planting by a type of dibbling method. This painting shows two men holding upright poles, at the base of which is a pointed extension. The extension measures the distance between rows. A string extends between these poles to which are tied knots of cloth at regular intervals. There are twenty-four women behind the rope, each with a hoe.

Accounts agree with the painting as the following reminiscence correlates most closely:

> Olof Krans and Olof Anderson held the end pieces of the rope on which were pieces of ribbon at intervals where the women planted corn with a hoe. Then there were pieces at the ends of the rope that were turned to give the necessary interval for the next row.[20]

Only in this account are the names of the men holding the rope mentioned. It is interesting to note that Krans's name appears as one of the men. It is not known if the same two people regularly held the poles or if the jobs were rotated and each man held the poles at alternate times. Either way, it is likely that Krans painted corn planting from memory as a participant and not just as an observer.

A newspaper article from 1907 gave a slightly different version of this process.

> Then each woman used a special piece of cloth as the mark for her row. She made a hole with her hoe into which a little girl who accompanied her, dropped three or four kernels of corn, after which the woman would cover it up and pass to the next hole.[21]

This is the only statement that connects children to the corn rope-planting method, suggesting that it may not have been standard work for them. Krans does not show children in this particular scene but he can only portray **one** scene in each painting.

Although Krans does not give an indication of the time frame of the painting, it represents the early years of the colony. The process of corn planting evolved over the first years. As A. Anderson remembered, "Later there were 'markers' that were of wood and pulled by horses across the fields. Then planting was done in the crossings by girls and women."[22] Still, corn planting continued by dibbling methods throughout the colony period. One colonist recalled that "corn planters [mechanical] were not in use until after the 'division' or dissolution of the colony."[23] Corn planters do not appear in estate inventories until after the colony era, and some interviews suggest that they were not used until after the Civil War.

The second planting scene is in "Sowing the Seeds." This painting, already discussed, shows three men, side by side, sowing by the scatter method. Behind them follows a woman who is marking their progress. The men appear to be scattering in rows or as close to rows as possible. Krans painted them all in the same position, using their right hands to scatter the seeds. Prior to the Civil War the scatter method was a common way to plant a variety of grains, including wheat and flax. The colony raised both those grains, so these fields may have been planted by scattering seeds. They apparently used the traditional methods of seed sowing throughout most of the colony period. The first sowing machines appear in the inventories for 1860 and 1861, the final colony years.[24]

The next process in the agricultural year is harvest time. Krans depicts this scene in "Cradling the Grain." He painted a very large field of grain, possibly wheat. Working side by side are seven men, each with a grain cradle. Their work exhibits the same apparent machine like motion so prevalent in Krans's work. Behind and to the left of each men is a row of grain that has just been cut. Twelve women follow the men, binding the grain and placing the bound sheaves behind them.

In this painting Krans exhibits a technical knowledge of the cradling process. He shows them cutting a curved swath and the grain lying to the correct side of the worker. A newspaper article in 1907 recalled that at the first harvest the

young man cradled and the women bound the sheaves, then the boys collected the sheaves and the older men placed them in shocks.[25] If this is correct Krans shows only part of the process and a select few of the workers. A variety of accounts indicated that the size of the harvest group changed, possibly with the size of the harvest. A letter in 1847, in discussing the first harvest, stated that "we have also sent nine of the young men . . . to cut wheat."[26] At another harvest there were "thirty men in one body who cradled. Each cut a swath 4 feet wide . . . Two women bound the grain after each cradle . . . Women collected the bundles."[27] In this painting there is one woman who looks as if she could be collecting the bundles.

The colony's second harvest was quite large and many additional workers were needed in the fields to finish the harvest before the first frost. Eric Aline remembered that "In 1848 we had 34 'cradles' which were run by 34 men, while two handy women bound after each cradle."[28] Another researcher discovered information that both men and women bound the sheaves.[29] Krans has definitely depicted only women performing this chore. Another colonist recalled that everyone, including children, were expected to help with the work in order to finish the harvest quickly.

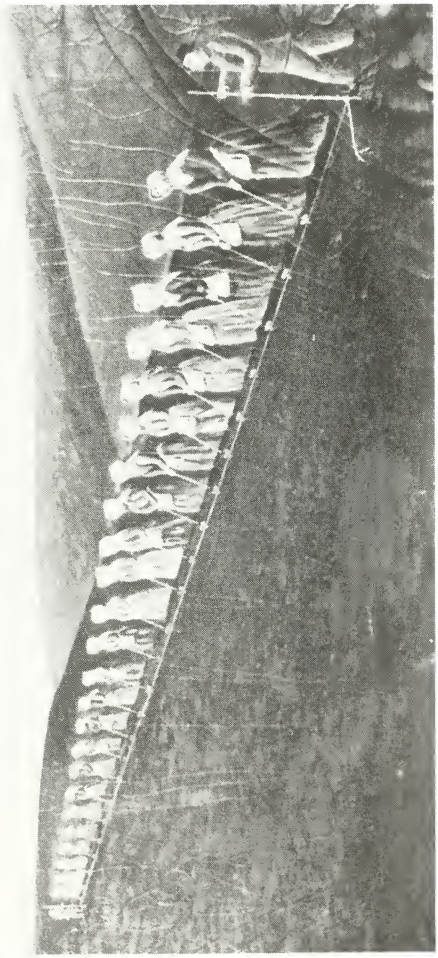
In these and other sources it is apparent that two people followed each cradle. There should, therefore, be fourteen women instead of twelve in the painting. The third and fourth cradles from the bottom of the work are each followed by one woman only. Why Krans thought these cradles only needed one binder is not known. One possibility is that Krans had a concern for composition and felt fourteen women would be too many. It could also be faulty memory. At the lower left corner he depicted a curve in the grain, as if there are more people working below the bottom of the painting. To the viewer this suggests that he has only painted a detail of a larger workgroup.

Bishop Hill residents, however, did not harvest grain by cradle throughout much of the colony era. Rather, they began the switch to machinery as soon as it was practical. The colony first began with a machine to thresh grain. They used this machine several times, although it did not perform smoothly. In 1849 the colonists borrowed a harvest machine from the nearby community of LaGrange. They were apparently not satisfied because they returned it right away to the owners and resumed using the cradles.[30] During the 1850s they again tried a harvesting machine, this one a simple reaper, and stayed with it. They discontinued using the cradles and made copies of the harvester. Krans's work does not reflect this change over to modern technology in the use of agricultural methods.

Large groups performed most agricultural work done by the colony. An outside observer commented that "In one place we noticed fifty young men, with the same number of horses and plows, cultivating a cornfield, where every furrow was two miles in length."[31] Krans is particularly successful in presenting this aspect of the colony as well as imparting the feeling that they worked together in some rhythm and that the communal aspect of their lives was all-pervasive. This organized group work has been discussed by other authors, including Edward Calkins. "The fields were cultivated by small squads working in a sort of military formation," he wrote, "performing operations in unison . . . emphasizing

"Plows on the Hillside."
Courtesy of the Illinois Department of Conservation.

"Sowing the Seeds."
Courtesy of the Illinois Department of Conservation.



"Women in a Row."
Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

"Cradling the Grain."
Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

"Pitching the Hay to Beat the Rain" or "It Will Soon Be Here."
Courtesy of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association.

"Building a Bridge to a Dra-Slapp Chant."
Courtesy of the Illinois Department of Conservation.

in this humble way the cooperative principle of their undertaking."[32] The analogy to the military is interesting. The colonists came from a background of required military service. It is not surprising that in attempting to start a new community in an unsettled and foreign land they found it convenient to revert to their earlier experience with martial discipline.

"Pitching the Hay to Beat the Rain" was originally entitled "It will soon be Here" by Krans. The title is painted in the lower right corner of the painting and it is one of the few works Krans did label. In this painting a storm approaches from the upper left corner. Just ahead of the storm two groups of workers are loading hay onto wagons. The foreground group consists of a wagon with two yoke of oxen, four oxen in all, which are managed by a young boy. Two men on the ground by the wagon pitch hay up to two people, a man and a woman, who spread the hay on top of the wagon. The second group also has two yoke of oxen led by a boy, but this group consists of two men and woman, all of whom are working from the ground.

The ox boys were an important part of the colony. According to one colonist they were assigned to this work when they were very young. "The boys began to drive oxen while yet very young. Some at the age of eight to ten."[33] It was the ox boys' duty to drive the oxen and to take care of them. In a community that depended on the strength and health of the oxen to perform much of their labor the ox boy was an integral part of the organization. Because of this function, the ox boy had a higher status in the society than children with other jobs, and was usually treated more like an adult. Consequently, many of the boys considered this one of the best jobs. By placing an ox boy in one of his paintings Krans has not only shown how a chore was accomplished but he has also given tribute to the social status of the ox boy.

This is the only painting in the Bishop Hill series that included a child. The boy looks straight at the viewer, something unusual in Krans's work since he painted most people in profile. Because Krans for some time was an ox boy, some people in the community and others familiar with his work believe that the boy is a self portrait. This theory cannot be verified, but the ox boy was crucial to the functioning of the colony and Krans's placement of one of them in his painting is appropriate.

The other unusual feature here is the presence of two women in the work groups, very actively participating in the work. From the previous reports, women appear to be accustomed to work in the fields as well as other work not necessarily considered part of the women's sphere by contemporary standards. This included their work in building a bridge, which appears in another painting. The women did perform the more traditional work of cooking, spinning, and sewing. But the tradition from which these people came allowed the women to work in the fields beside the men. Since the number of women was greater than the number of men putting them to work in the fields was taking advantage of an available resource. For a society like Bishop Hill to survive communally it was necessary for all people to work when needed, the result of which led to the breakdown of some traditional sex roles.

In all of Krans's paintings of Bishop Hill only three types of farm animals appear: hogs, oxen, and horses. This fact is misleading to the viewer because

the colony had a large assortment of other animals. In 1855 it claimed 1,000 hogs, 568 head of cattle, 109 horses and mules, some sheep and assorted poultry.[34] They did not list oxen separately and used cattle for dairy purposes also. Perhaps Krans only painted the animals he considered most important or useful in the life of the colony.

DOCUMENTATION OF ARTIFACTUAL DETAILS

The paintings will now be considered for accuracy in depicting artifacts on the basis of available resources such as descriptions of tools and clothing, extant artifacts, and one drawing of an original colony dress.

Since all but one painting involves humans, it is important to consider the appearance of their clothing. In "Women in a Row" the women wear what appears to be one-piece dresses of blue, brown, lavendar, and gray. The bodice is fitted and the skirt is full. The sleeves are long, full at the top, and fitted at the bottom. The women all wear light-colored sunbonnets with a large brim and the back ruffle is long, covering the shoulders. Most of the women are wearing kerchiefs at their necks.

The woman in "Sowing the Seeds" is wearing a dark blue dress of similar description. She wears a dark blue sunbonnet with a long ruffle. Her kerchief is red and has a white print. She also has an apron which covers the front of her dress and wears white gloves.

Both blue and brown dresses are painted in "Cradling the Grain." Two of the women, behind the third cradle from the top, have white blouses and brown or blue skirts. The sunbonnets are light colored, perhaps white or blue. Some of the women have on white aprons but a few of the women have aprons the same color as their dresses. The women in "Pitching the Hay" wear dark blue dresses and sunbonnets.

In Sweden a woman's age determined her style and color of the clothing. Younger women wore lighter colored clothing and older women chose the darker hues. In addition to age, their costume changed with the region in which they lived.

At Bishop Hill, although each woman usually made her own clothes, the same materials and patterns were available. So, basically, one woman's clothing looked very much like another's. Items of clothing were also distributed annually with variations in color reflecting seasonal changes of clothes. A colony woman recalled that "The everyday clothes of the women were made of blue 'drilling', on Sundays they wore calico dresses."[35] Drilling was a heavy cotton cloth, a slightly lighter weight than denim, but equally strong and serviceable.

The only surviving colony dress was destroyed in a fire in the 1960's. Fortunately, it was sketched in the 1930s as part of the WPA project *Index of American Design*. The dress was "home spun flax, sepia background, dark lavendar stripes."[36] It had a fitted bodice, long sleeves gathered at the top which ended in fitted cuffs, and a very full skirt gathered onto a waistband. It was buttoned down the front to the waist. It dated from 1850-56, about the same time period as the Krans paintings represent. Because it was constructed from a lighter weight,

patterned material the dress was probably worn for special occasions and on Sundays. The basic style was similar to the dresses used for everyday wear.

The drawing looks very much like dresses painted by Krans, with less fullness of the skirt. This difference could be due to the perspective of the paintings or perhaps because dresses worn for special occasions were made with slightly fuller skirts. In addition, women working in the fields may not have worn all the petticoats necessary to give the dress its proper fullness. The women wearing the white blouses in "Cradling the Grain" are wearing a type of underblouse. These garments appear in clothing inventories for the time period along with the skirts. On a hot day a skirt and blouse were practical.

For headcoverings, Mrs. H. Lindwall, a former colonist, stated that "The women wore sunbonnets in the summertime."[35] All the women in Krans's paintings are wearing sunbonnets. These paintings represent spring, summer, and fall. In the painting "Building a Bridge," the women are wearing scarves. Clothing inventories show that women were issued both sunbonnets and scarves so they could wear either. Scarves were more traditional in most parts of Sweden while the sunbonnet was a standard headcovering in the United States. During this time period the women would certainly not go outdoors without some type of headcovering. Therefore, Krans is correct in showing either bonnets or scarves. Aprons worn by the women were long and full, of either plain or printed fabrics.[36] Kerchiefs tied around the neck varied somewhat with the region from which the woman came, and some people brought their own kerchiefs from Sweden. Mrs. Lindwall recalled that "The Forssa people had the most silk kerchief."[37] From the analysis, Krans presents quite accurately women's work clothing.

Krans depicts more variation in the clothing worn by the men. In "Plows on the Hillside" the men wear white or blue shirts and blue pants. They have light, straw colored hats. In "Sowing the Seeds" the sowers wear dark jackets, dark pants, and black hats with large brims. Some of the plowmen wear lighter colored shirts with dark vests. All are wearing black footwear. All seven men in "Cradling the Grain" wear blue slacks, light colored or white shirts, red neck scarves, and black hats, belts, and footwear. The man at the lower left corner of the painting has rolled up his sleeves. In all of Krans's paintings this is the only person who has made an individual concession to comfort.

At the Bishop Hill Heritage Association there is one surviving man's jacket and one shirt. These items probably survived because they are dress clothes. The jacket is a dark blue wool and with fabric covered buttons on the front. The shirt is white with tin buttons at the top and on the sleeve cuffs. It is collarless and has a button placket down the front. There are initials cross stitched in red below the placket.

Mikkelsen, a Bishop Hill scholar, wrote that "The men dressed in jeans or woolen stuffs . . .."[45] Since jean material is blue Krans painted the men's slacks the correct color. Colony tailors made the men's clothing and these clothes looked alike. In inventories the shirts appear as either striped or white.[46] There are also listings for work blouses. Vests appear, as do cotton and wool shirts, shoes, boots, and coats. Usually, they are not described by color. Neck scarves are also listed occasionally but like the women, many men may have brought their scarves from Sweden. Inventories also contain records of hats and caps but they do not

distinguish between style or materials. Krans's accuracy in depicting details of the appearance of men's clothing cannot be adequately evaluated because of lack of existing artifacts as well as the lack of sufficient detail in the paintings.

Other artifacts are represented in Krans's work. Seed sacks appear in two paintings. The sacks in "Sowing the Seeds" are of a very common variety for the time, a white bag with wide attached shoulder strap. This construction allowed the sower to carry the bag on his shoulder and sow at the same time. There are no existing colony seed sacks. "Women in a Row" exhibits seed sacks the women have tied around their waists. The sacks have an opening on the left side. The women do not appear to be wearing aprons which they normally would have worn; so these sacks are likely formed by the apron tucked up under the waistband. This arrangement would hold the seeds within their reach but not impede their motions or require special equipment.

In general the existing agricultural artifacts from the colony are typical for the pre-Civil War period. Existing artifacts can be viewed at the historical agencies in Bishop Hill and include a grain cradle, pitchfork, yokes, and plows. A corn planting-rope is listed in the collections of the Augustana Historical Society in Rock Island, Illinois but could not be located at the time of this writing. With the exception of size, the cradle, yoke, and pitchforks Krans painted look very similar to those in museum collections. Perspective and size have been noted as problems in Krans's work, so this is not a valid basis for contention.

The plows that appear in the colony are quite interesting. The colonists brought very few agricultural implements with them from Sweden so it was necessary to obtain plows upon their arrival. Very early business accounts with non-colonists record purchases of plows and other implements from manufacturers and dealers. The colonists were interested in technological advances and in having the right tool for the job. Thus the type of plow varied with the task to be performed. Sources previously cited state that the colony used thirty-six inch plows for prairie breaking. In "Plows on the Hillside" Krans painted very large and heavy plows. They have a long share, the plow beam is long and at the front end are two wheels, attached to a handle, from which the plowman steered the plow. Those in "Sowing the Seeds" are smaller, and do not have either wheels or a steering bar, which better match the previously cited use of twenty-inch plows.

The colony's use of a large variety of plows is exhibited in entries in the 1850 estate inventory of Eric Jansson: five Bartlett patented breaking plows and timber for twenty-two more, three prairie plows, ten seed plows and five shovel plows.[42] Since the colony purchased equipment from several manufacturers, there is no standard appearance for their plows. In addition, they often fabricated their own tools to resemble those from famous manufacturers.

The appearance of the fences in several paintings should be noted. In most of the paintings from the Bishop Hill series straight fences, three or four rungs high and held by upright posts, are drawn. Only the fence painted in "Pitching the Hay" differs from this. It is a serpentine structure, about ten rungs high, which is held by crossed poles. The serpentine fence was common in frontier areas because it was easy to construct and could be made with the material available. There is no indication of location for this fence or its purpose. No wooden colony fences exist today. This fence is not likely to mark a colony boun-

dary. At least a portion of the colony was bounded by "a sod earth wall two feet thick with a ditch outside."[43] It is possible that the fence was around a pasture and is probably as accurate as the straight fence.

Krans was adequate when he depicted artifacts. His work can not be definitively judged because of a lack of detail in some of the paintings, and the problem in finding currently existing artifacts.

These conclusions can now be applied to an additional painting, "Building a Bridge to a Dra-Slapp Chant." This painting is particularly intriguing because of the dearth of information surrounding it. In it Krans depicts a bridge under construction across the Edwards River. Ten women operate a pile driving mechanism, under the supervision of one man. The women are wearing scarves and overcoats. A barnyard with a cabin and hog yards is visible on the right side of the painting.

The first issue to address is the presence of women at this work site. Since women appear in the other Krans paintings performing heavy chores, and colonist memories substantiate this, it is likely that women were equally active in bridge building. The presence of a man as supervisor also appears in other Krans work and so we could infer that during this time period women worked under male supervision.

The women's skirts are similar to those portrayed in other paintings. The scarves and overcoats are new additions, though, and not depicted in any other paintings from the Bishop Hill series. They do appear in clothing issue inventories but since there are no extant artifacts their physical appearance cannot be analyzed for accuracy.

There is only one account of working along the Edwards River. This occurs in an interview taken in 1907 by Bishop Hill resident Philip Stoneberg.

> The first work Barlow and others were set to do on their arrival here- a few days before Christmas- was to cut off the bend of the creek at the steam mill. A long sled was used on which the excavated soil was placed and pulled by oxen. The old part- the bend- was poled off. They had a 'hejare' with which they struck on the poles. Women helped in the work. "Har gar en, Har gar twa" the women would say, as they worked away.[44]

This account illustrates the colonists' work along the river; however, they are not building a bridge. At some time during the colony period a bridge was built across the Edward's River but no record has been found to date the construction. The village destroyed the original bridge around 1900 and built a new one, so it is not possible to check the structure itself. Krans's "Building a Bridge" is the only known record of the old bridge's existence. It appears also in "Bishop Hill as seen from North of the Edwards in 1855." According to this work, the bridge existed in 1855 and the Bishop Hill Heritage Association believes that it was constructed about the same time as the sawmill, about 1851 or 1852.[45]

The construction of the bridge presents another dilemma. According to Diderot and other technical manuals, small bridges of this time period were built using pile driving equipment similar to the one presented in the painting. Humans operated the mechanisms. The colonists did not carry this tradition from Sweden. The river beds in most of Sweden are rock, and a pile driving mechanism was useless. This method was, therefore, learned in the United States.

CONCLUSIONS

Krans's Bishop Hill paintings present a number of problems to historians who would use them as historical sources of information about the colony. For example, Krans illustrated few of the technological advances of the time period even though the colonists were very interested in "modern" equipment and practices. He painted only the older ways, giving his works a nostalgic appeal. In addition, his genre paintings represented just the agricultural work of the colony. These characteristics could result from the fact that the paintings were done in commemoration of the fiftieth anniversary of the colony. Through a bit of nostalgia and sentimentality Krans may have wanted the people to relive the "Good Old Days" and felt these scenes would be best remembered by them. But in doing do he left for future Bishop Hill generations a mixed record of their ancestors.

Krans did not paint exclusively from his own memory. He also used photographs and the recollections of friends and relatives. The paintings had already been heavily critiqued before they were presented to the public at the anniversary celebration. His work at the time was very well received by the people of Bishop Hill. A newsman wrote: "Olof Krans is entitled to much credit for the faithful reproduction of old colony scenes in a series of large paintings."[46]

But even collective memories of the former colonists, many of whom were very young children at the time, could be faulty. In addition Krans's work was being painted at the same time that Philip Stoneberg was collecting interviews and reminiscences from former colonists. Because of this it is almost impossible to determine to what extent these interviews affected what Krans painted, or indeed whether Krans's paintings became memory for some of these people and were then repeated to Stoneberg as fact.

Krans also does not allow for much individuality on the part of the people who appear in his paintings. Their facial features are about the same; they are all of similar size, and dress very closely alike. Their motions and positions are usually identical. Krans does not paint left-handed people; everyone uses their right hand. This uniformity is probably more the result of his lack of professional training. For people interested in individual colonists Krans painted a series of colonist portraits which are located today at the Colony Church. A few of these were painted from memory, while many were painted from photographs taken during the latter half of the nineteenth century.

Can Krans's work be used as a reliable historical document? His renditions of the prairie are very good. Physical features of Bishop Hill are also good with buildings painted down to intricate architectural details. He painted the Blacksmith Shop, for instance, in its 1857 form in "Bishop Hill as Seen from North of the Edwards in 1855." Since this building was in existence in 1855 the painting can still be used as an accurate painted map of the colony.

Krans's visual description of daily life is definitely pre-1855. For the most part he has accurately shown work groups and work relations. There is a discrepancy in the number of oxen teams required to pull a breaking plow and in the number of people needed to bind grain behind a cradle. The inconsistency is small and he adequately expressed the working methods of a communal society.

Artifactual details are also adequately represented. He accurately painted women's and men's clothing. The agricultural implements correspond closely to the common forms of the time period. Some artifacts can only be analyzed superficially because of lack of detail in the paintings or because of the lack of extant artifacts.

Overall Krans was faithful in his depiction of Bishop Hill. His work can be used as historical document, with discretion, and should prove useful to both the student of Bishop Hill and communal societies in general. One must always keep in mind, however, that folk genre scenes should not be assumed to be absolutely correct in their documentation. They are, as Louis C. Jones stated, "as reliable as most diaries and reminiscences."[47] They serve as an additional tool for the social historian who seeks to understand the lives of people seldom recorded elsewhere.

NOTES

[1]Dr. Louis C. Jones defines genre as "a depiction of everyday life, a moment, an incident involving human beings, usually at a social level below that of the more favored class." "Genre in American Folk Art" *Three Eyes on the Past* (Syracuse, N.Y.: Syracuse University Press, 1982), p. 167.

[2]In general Krans did not name his paintings. The names used here are from George Swank, who has written the only major work on Krans. Exceptions are noted in the text.

[3]"Letter to the Editor," *Aurora* (Illinois) *Beacon,* July 28, 1847.

[4]"Anders Wiberg's Account of a Trip to the United States in 1852-53," *The Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly Reprints,* (April, 1978).

[5]A Barlow, Interview by Philip J. Stoneberg, October 1, 1907, Philip J. Stoneberg Papers, Swenson Swedish Immigration Research Center, Rock Island, Illinois.

[6]Ernest W. Olson, *The Swedish Element in Illinois, A Survey of the Past Seven Decades (Chicago: Swedish American Biographical Association, 1917),* p. 46.

[7]"Letter from an Old Settler," quoted in George Swank, *Painter Krans: OK of Bishop Hill* (Galva, Illinois: The Galvaland Press, 1976), p. 82.

[8]Ronald Nelson, Bishop Hill Heritage Association, personal letter, September 1986.

[9]Olav Isaksson and Soren Hallgren, *Bishop Hill: A Utopia on the Prairie* (Stockholm, Sweden: L.T. Publishing Co., 1969).

[10]Ibid., p. 70

[11]Ibid., p. 125-26.

[12]Bishop Hill Colony Charter and By-Laws, January 1853, Philip J. Stoneberg Papers, Bishop Hill Heritage Association Archives, Bishop Hill, Illinois.

[13]Ibid.

[14]Carolyn Anderson and J. Hiram Wilson, "Material Culture in the Bishop Hill Colony: Restoration Inventory for Bishop Hill Historic Site," 1980, p. 213.

[15]Olson, *The Swedish Element,* p. 47.

[16]Frank C. Krans, "Bishop Hill - Yesterday and Today," *The Altona* (Illinois) *Record,* September 24, 1924.

[17]Swank, *Painter Krans,* p. 83.

[18]Wilson, *"Material Cultures,"* p. 213.

[19]Olson, *The Swedish Element,* p. 47.

[20]A. Anderson, Interview by Philip J. Stoneberg, October 4, 1907, Philip J. Stoneberg Papers, Swenson Swedish Immgration Research Center, Rock Island, Illinois.

[21]"Childlife in the Bishop Hill Colony," *The Geneseo* (Illinois) *Republic,* 1907.

[22]A. Anderson Interview, October 4, 1907.

[23]Lars Hagberg, Interview by Philip J. Stoneberg, October 22, 1914, Philip J. Stoneberg Papers, Bishop Hill Heritage Association, Bishop Hill, Illinois.

[24]Wilson, *"Material Cultures,"* p. 214-215.

[25]Krans, "Bishop Hill."

[26]H. Arnold Barton, *Letters From the Promised Land: Swedes in America 1840-1914* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1975), p. 40.

[27]Lars Hagberg, interview, October 22, 1914.

[28]Eric Aline to Philip J. Stoneberg, March 16, 1914 (trans.), Philip Stoneberg Papers, Bishop Hill Heritage Association Archives, Bishop Hill, Illinois.

[29]Michael A. Mikkelsen, *Bishop Hill Colony, A Religious Communistic Settlement in Henry County, Illinois. Johns Hopkins University Studies,* Tenth Series, p. 34.

[30]*Svenskarne i Illinois,* as quoted in Philip J. Stoneberg, *Notes,* Philip J. Stoneberg Papers, Bishop Hill Heritage Association Archives, Bishop Hill, Illinois.

[31]Mikkelsen, *Bishop Hill,* p. 54.

[32]Swank, *Painter Krans,* p. 82.

[33]J.P. Chaiser, Interview by Philip J. Stoneberg, September 23, 1908, Philip J. Stoneberg Papers, Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois.

[34]Swank, *Painter Krans,* p. 82.

[35]Mrs. H. Linwall, Interview by Philip J. Stoneberg, February 3, 1908, Philip J. Stoneberg Papers, Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois.

[36]*Index of American Design,* Classification #1 11-Co-1, November 21, 1938.

[37]Lindwall, Interview, February 3, 1908.

[38]Wilson, *"Material Cultures"*, p. 169.

[39]Lindwall, Interview, February 3, 1908, Forssa is a parish in Hälsingland, Sweden.

[40]Mikkelsen, *Bishop Hill,* p. 55

[41]Wilson, *"Material Cultures,"* p. 167.

[42]Ibid., p. 213.

[43]O. Pilstrand, Interview by Philip J. Stoneberg, September 30, 1907, Philip J. Stoneberg Papers, Knox College, Galesburg, Illinois.

[44]Barlow, Interview, October 1, 1907.

[45]Ron Nelson, Interview, Bishop Hill Heritage Association, September 30, 1986.

[46]As quoted in Swank, *Painter Krans,* p. 22.

[47]Jones, *Three Eyes on the Past,* p. 169.

BIBLIOGRAPHY OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE PUBLICATIONS ON BISHOP HILL

Ander, Oscar Fritiof, *The Cultural Heritage of the Swedish Immigrant* (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana College Library, 1956).

Anderson, Theo J., *History of Bishop Hill, 1846-1946* (Chicago, Illinois: Theo J. Anderson, 1946)

Barton, H. Arnold, *Letters from the Promised Land* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1975).

Benson, Adolph B., ed., *Swedes in America, 1638-1938* (New York, New York: Yale University Press, 1938).

Bestor, Arthur, *Backwoods Utopias* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1950)

Bigelow, Hon. Hiram, "The Bishop Hill Colony." *Transactions of the Illinois State Historical Society,* no. 7 (1902).

Calkins, Ernest Elmo, *They Broke the Prairie* (New York, New York; Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937).

Centennial History of Illinois (Springfield, Illinois: Illinois Centennial Commission) Vol. 3 (1919): 20-21.

Dowie, J. Iverne and Espelie, Ernest M., eds., *The Swedish Immigrant Community in Transition: Essays in Honor of Dr. Conrad Bergendoff* (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Historical Society, 1963).

Elmen, Gretalyn, "Wounds of Parting," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* 26 (1975): 16-23.

Elmen, Paul, *Wheat Flour Messiah,* (Carbondale, Illinois: Southern Illinois University Press, 1976).

Erdahl, Sivert, "Eric Jansson and the Bishop Hill Colony," *Journal of the Illinois State Historical Society* 18 (1925): 503-574.

Fried, Albert, *Socialism in America* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday, 1970).

Furer, Howard B., ed., *The Scandinavians in America, 986-1970* (Dobbs Ferry, New York: Oceana Publications, Inc., 1972).

Hedin, Naboth and Benson, Adolph, *Americans from Sweden* (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania: J.B. Lippencott Company, 1950).

Hedstrom, Emmelyne Arnquist, *Historic Bishop Hill, 1846-1946* (Aledo, Illinois: The Times Record Company, 1946)

Henry County Chronicle. Volume 2, nos. 21-26 (1860).

Isaksson, Olov and Hallgren, Soren, *Bishop Hill, Illinois: A Utopia on the Prairie* (Stockholm, Sweden: L.T. Publishing House, 1969).

Jacobson, Margaret E., *Bishop Hill 1846* (Bishop Hill Old Settlers Association, 1941). "The Painted Record of a Community Experiment: Olof Krans and His Pictures of the Bishop Hill Colony," *Journal of Illinois State Historical Society* 34 (1941): 164-176.

Janson, Florence E., *The Background of Swedish Immigration,* (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1931).

Kanter, Rosabeth Moss, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1972).

Kett, H.F. and Company, *The History of Henry County, Illinois* (Chicago, Illinois: H.F. Kett and Company, 1877).

Kiner, Henry L., *History of Henry County, Illinois,* 2 volumes (Chicago, Illinois: Pioneer Publishing Company, 1910).

Lindberg, John S., *The Background of Swedish Emigration to the United States* Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1930).

Mikkelsen, Michael A., "The Bishop Hill Colony: A Religious Communistic Settlement in Henry County, Illinois," *Johns Hopkins University Studies in Political and Historical Science,* Series 10, (1892): 1-80.

Miller, Eric, "Janssonism and Post-Janssonist Religion in Bishop Hill" (Honors thesis, Knox College, 1986).

Nelson, Charles, "Toward A More Accurate Approximation Of The Class Composition Of the Erik Janssonists," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* 26 (1975): 3-15.

Nelson, O.N., *History of the Scandinavians and Successful Scandinavians in the United States,* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: O.N. Nelson, and Company, 1900).

Nelson, Ronald E., "The Bishop Hill Colony and Its Pioneer Economy," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* 18 (1967): 32-48.

_____, "Bishop Hill, A Colony of Swedish Pietists in Illinois," *Antiques,* 99 (1971): 140-147.

Nelson, Ronald E., "Bishop Hill: Swedish Development of the Western Illinois Frontier," *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 1 (1978): 109-120.

Nordhoff, Charles, *The Communistic Societies of the United States* (New York, New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1875).

Norton, John E., "And Utopia Became Bishop Hill," *Historic Preservation* 24 (1971): 4-12. "Anders Wiberg's Account of a Trip to the United States in 1852-1853, Pt. 1," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* 29 (1978): 89-116.

Noyes, John Humphrey, *History of American Socialism* (New York, New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1966).

Olson, Ernst W., *History of the Swedes of Illinois,* Pt. 1 (Chicago, Illinois: Engberg-Holmberg Publishing Company, 1908). *The Swedish Element in Illinois* (Chicago, Illinois; Swedish-American Biographical Association, 1917).

Olsson, Nils William, *Swedish Passenger Arrivals in New York, 1820-1850* (Chicago, Illinois: Swedish Pioneer Historical Society, 1967).

Setterdahl, Lilly, "Emigrant Letters by Bishop Hill Colonists from Nora Parish," *Western Illinois Regional Studies* 1 (1978): 121-175.

Setterdahl, Lilly and Wilson, J. Hiram, "Hotel Accommodations in the Bishop Hill Colony," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* 29 (1978): 180-197.

Sparks, Esther, "Olof Krans, Prairie Painter," *Historic Preservation* 24 (1972): 9.

Stephenson, George M., *The Religious Aspects of Swedish Immigration* (Minneapolis, Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 1932).

Swank, George, *Painter Krans,* (Galva, Illinois: Galvaland Press, 1976). *Bishop Hill, A Showcase of Swedish History* (Galva, Illinois: Galvaland Press, 1978).

Wald, Arthur, trans., *The Pioneering Adventures of Johan Edvard Lilljeholm in American* (Rock Island, Illinois: Augustana Historical Society, 1962).

Webber, Everett, *Escape to Utopia: The Communal Movement in America* (New York, New York: Hastings House Publishers, 1959).

Westerberg, Wesley, "Bethel Ship to Bishop Hill" and "Document (Letter of Olof Olsson)," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* Vol. 23, (1972): 55-70.

Wilson, Carolyn Anderson, "Revitalization, emigration and social organization an ethnohistorical study of the Bishop Hill Colony," (Honors thesis, Knox College, 1973).

Wilson, Carolyn Anderson and J. Hiram Wilson, "Material Culture in the Bishop Hill Colony. Restoration Inventory for Bishop Hill State Historic Site," Unpublished report (Illinois State Historical Library, Springfield, Illinois, 1980).

Wilson, J. Hiram, "Property as a Social Institution in the Bishop Hill Colony: An Ethnohistorical Study" (Honors paper, Knox College, 1973).

Wright, Rochelle, "Stuart Engstrand and Bishop Hill," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* 28 (1977): 192-204.

REVIEWS OF BOOKS

QUEST FOR REFUGE: THE MORMON FLIGHT FROM AMERICAN PLURALISM. By Marvin S. Hill. Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989. Pp. vii-288. Acknowledgements, introduction, notes, index. $19.95, cloth.

Marvin S. Hill, one of the deans of the "New Mormon History," has produced an outstanding analysis of Mormonism's formative period that places the church in the context of the larger currents of the nation during the Jacksonian era. A revision of Hill's Ph.D. dissertation completed more than twenty years ago, this book will undoubtedly become a benchmark for future historical scholarship on the subject.

Hill narrates the early history of the church through the lens of a challenging new thesis. He asserts that the Mormon attempt to build what they called "Zion" was really a means of counteracting the declining role of religion in an increasingly secular world. The significant religions of the nation celebrated individualism, business success, optimism, and competition just as fully as they taught Christian virtues and traditions. The merging of these ideals into a religious synthesis would have been acceptable to most Americans, but, in Hill's words, to "the Unconverted, Religiously Disoriented, and Poor" who were without hope, the era fostered the worst possible environment.

Smith's religious awakening and prophetic mission, according to Hill, incorporated a biting alienation from American society and a call for a radical restoration of what he perceived as religion at the center of human life. This involved a return to theocratic government and communal lifestyles. Hill wrote of those who became Mormons:

> Cast adrift, they desperately needed to bring God into their lives, to allow him to rule in all things. They wanted a society that would exclude unnecessary choices and would exclude pluralism. Above all, they wanted to diminish the secular influences that pluralism engendered (p. 14).

The Latter Day Saint movement represented the culmination of the search for a refuge from the increasingly pluralistic society around them.

Perhaps Hill summarized his thesis best in his first chapter's concluding paragraph:

> "Joseph Smith, the Mormon prophet, sought to revitalize this magical world view of Medieval society, combine it with elements of more traditional Christianity, and establish a theocratic society where the unconverted, the poor, and the socially and religiously alienated could gather and find a refuge from the competing sects and the uncertainties they engendered. His efforts to do so would bring him into conflict with leaders and others of the established order who were otherwise-minded" (p. 17).

During the course of Smith's career, therefore, the church he headed sought to create this theocratic government and communal society as a bulwark against what it understood as the vices of the world.

It was this concern that religion be in the center of their lives that led the Mormons to establish such communities as that at Nauvoo. These community-building attempts always led to conflict with outsiders since the Saints challenged the established order so thoroughly. The result was predictable, the violence that erupted in Hancock County and in other locations where the Mormons had large

populations. At the death of Joseph Smith but not of the quest for refuge, many of the remaining Saints recognized that they had to remove themselves entirely from American society in order to pursue their theocratic goals. The result was the famous escape under Brigham Young of a large body of Mormons to the Great Basin and the establishment of a religious commonwealth. When American society finally reached them there, however, the Mormons encountered the same problems, and a desperate struggle between the two societies took place. Hill concluded: "Before they could secure a more tranquil place for their society within the confines of the American Republic, however, they would have to give up their unique political party, their plural marriages, their army, and their loyalties to a theocratic political kingdom" (p. 182).

The approach Hill takes toward early Mormonism is exciting, well-reasoned, and convincing. *Quest for Refuge* is one of the most important books published on early Mormon history in the last quarter century. Hill brings to his argument a thorough understanding of Mormonism and its place in the larger framework of American society. His impressive work is well worth the time it takes to study 182 pages of text and another 86 pages of documentation. It clearly outlines a significant thesis about the development of the early Mormon religion and stimulates all to consider carefully the formative period of the church. It will be of interest to all readers interested in the early development of Mormonism.

Roger D. Launius
Command Historian
Military Airlift Command, USAF
Scott AFB, Illinois

LAND FEVER: DISPOSSESSION AND THE FRONTIER MYTH. By James Marshall. Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1988. Pp. 240. $21.

Everyone remembers that Horace Greeley said, "Go west, young man." Nobody remembers what he said when he got there: "Tens of thousands have thus paid the Government price of their quarter section twice or thrice over before they could call them their own" (*New York Tribune*, June 16, 1860).

One of those tens of thousands was Omar Morse, who lost three homesteads in Wisconsin and Minnesota between 1854 and 1878. *In Land Fever: Dispossession and the Frontier Myth*, James Marshall explores the down side of the American Dream by wedding Morse's autobiography to historical and literary appraisals of failure on the frontier.

Marshall, who is Morse's great-grandson, sees his ancestor as both unique and representative: representative because his experience was that of the tens of thousands of dispossessed pioneers to whom Greeley referred; unique because, unlike most of them, Morse broke the frontier code of silence to focus his autobiography on his failures and hardships.

This autobiography tells the story of an ordinary man who was lured by the promise of the Jeffersonian ideal to the Wisconsin frontier. According to the agrarians, he should have been able to purchase cheap land and achieve economic

independence as a yeoman farmer, thus becoming part of the natural aristocracy of successful, self-sufficient, independent landowners who guaranteed the future of the American democracy. However, high interest rates, unscrupulous land speculators, sickness, bad weather and crop failures forced him to sell his improved land for less than it was worth because he could not get enough of it into production to pay his mortgage. Dispossession then became a way of life for Morse and his family, and he ended his days as a subsistence farmer, having managed to hang on to twenty-one acres of his third homestead. Yet in a letter to his blacksmith son, Morse advised him to acquire an acreage of his own on which to retire. The dream died hard.

Land Fever gives the reader a tripartite perspective on this failed dream. In the second part of the book, Marshall documents the prevalence of dispossession on the frontier as he relates Morse's experience to those of other pioneers. He surveys the scholarship in this area, citing studies by Paul Gates, Fred Shannon, Margaret Canonvan, Robert Klepper, James Youngdale, and Richard Hofstadter to support his theory that the dispossession experience was widespread enough to undergird the Populist movement that flourished after the Civil War. Marshall also shows that dispossession resulted not from shiftlessness and wastefulness as popularly believed, but from economic factors beyond the control of the homesteader.

In the third section of the book, Marshall opposes a countermyth to the well-known notion of the garden of the West, immortalized by Henry Nash Smith in *Virgin Land*. In the works of such writers as Hamlin Garland, Ignatius Donnelly, Edward Eggleston, Joseph Kirkland, Mark Twain and Frank Norris, Marshall traces the myth of the unweeded garden of dispossession and shows how this myth proved seminal for such twentieth century writers as Sinclair Lewis, Sherwood Anderson, and Edgar Lee Masters.

In his introduction, Marshall states that he considers Morse to be a universal figure because his failure to achieve the Jeffersonian ideal, to partake in the bounty of the garden of the West, was not only Morse's failure but the failure of so many pioneers that it represents a cultural phenomenon. His decision to present this phenomenon from three perspectives has resulted in a balanced and convincing piece of scholarship that is of value to historians and literary scholars of the West and Midwest, as well as to *aficionados* of family history. This thoroughly researched and well-written study deserves a permanent place on the shelves of university libraries and on the reading lists of college courses that deal with the frontier experience.

Marcia Noe
The University of Tennessee at Chattanooga

THE HISTORIAN'S LINCOLN: PSEUDOHISTORY, PSYCHOHISTORY, AND HISTORY. Edited by Gabor S. Boritt and Norman O. Forness. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1988. Pp. xxviii + 423. Illustrated. $24.95.

The perennial test applied to new books on the subject of Abraham Lincoln

is whether the work under review adds any new information or perspectives to the 10,000 (and growing) publications already available. Happily, the answer in this case is yes, and for several reasons. Editor Gabor Boritt, his associate editor Norman Forness, and an impressive roster of contributors have provided serious readers with this decade's update and forum on Lincoln scholarship.

This ample volume (plus a separately published pamphlet of rebuttal essays) is the product of "Lincoln 175," an ambitious conference hosted by Gettysburg College in the fall of 1984. The list of contributors and other participants is a veritable Who's Who of academic Lincolniana. The book offers thirteen essays on various subjects, organized around five headings: "The Common People's Lincoln," "Ideology and Politics," "The Psychohistorian's Lincoln," "The Assassination," and "The Lincoln Biographers." Each paper is followed by commentary from one or two panelists. In addition there are two sections of illustrations, including selections from "The Lincoln Image," a concurrent Gettysburg College exhibition of mid-nineteenth century popular prints.

Readers with diverse historical appetites are bound to find something of interest in the contents. There are papers on such disparate topics as humor, iconography, economics, political philosophy, Indians, black rights, psychobiography, assassination conspiracy theories, and Lincoln in fiction. As with any such collection, there are some disappointments and puzzles as well as achievements. The presence as a commentator of M.E. Bradford is one such mystery, not as much due to his polemical and generally discredited views on Lincoln and race, but chiefly because his remarks take the form of a zealous self-defense rather than a critique of the paper under consideration. Most of the essays and much of the commentary, on the other hand, are to the point, informative, and well-reasoned. The best papers represent amplifications or elaborations of the author's own published scholarship. In this category of particularly valuable effort are the essays of Gabor Boritt on "Lincoln and the Economics of the American Dream," LaWanda Cox on "Lincoln and Black Freedom," Charles Strozier on "Lincoln's Quest for Meaning: Public and Private Meanings," and Thomas R. Turner, "Beware the People Weeping." Of special merit for their critical perspective are the review essays by the book's two senior Lincoln scholars, Richard N. Current and Don E. Fehrenbacher.

While the variety of topics is impressive, no book—even of this size—could cover everything. This reviewer notes with disappointment but little surprise the meager attention paid to Lincoln's career as a lawyer. As with most general studies and biographies, the law practice receives only passing reference in this book. Several contributors and commentators devote a paragraph or two to the subject, which by any reasonable measure deserves fuller study. One problem is the practical inaccessibility of documentary evidence pertaining to Lincoln's quarter century as an active and successful legal practitioner. A long term effort is underway to overcome this obstacle. Another and less defensible explanation is the difficulty many Lincoln students have in mastering legal history and thus the thousands of cases Lincoln handled.

It is interesting that several topics and themes recur through these pages. One is the provocative address the 28-year old Lincoln delivered in 1838 before the Young Men's Lyceum of Springfield. The text of this speech is welcome grist for analysis from many different perspectives. Other pervasive themes include

Lincoln mythology, his religious beliefs, and his stance on slavery.

Contrary to the editor's wishes, the publisher of this volume chose not to include rebuttal comments by the contributors. Not to be denied, Boritt arranged to issue a supplementary pamphlet, "The Historian's Lincoln: Rebuttals. What the University Press Would Not Print." Its seven essays add further leaven to an already generous menu of thoughtful analysis. Persons interested in this tract may order copies from the Civil War Studies Office at Gettysburg College.

This is a welcome addition to the lengthy shelves of Lincoln literature. Anyone interested in keeping abreast of recent and ongoing Lincoln scholarship cannot overlook it.

Cullom Davis
Sangamon State University.

LIVING WITH LINCOLN. By Dan Guillory, Urbana: Stormline Press, 1989. Pp iv, 121 $8.95.

"Every time we admire these old structures, we make a private journey to the past, and in doing so we expand the resources of our sometimes diminishing present," writes Dan Guillory in an essay of this collection which delves into the significance of several old houses in Decatur, Illinois. By extention of this guiding principle in Guillory's writing, each reader of his book is given an opportunity to share a sensitive, private journey through central Illinois. Ever bringing the present and the past together, he works to enrich or even defend citizens of the Heartland from the physical threats and spiritual perils of an unfathomable future.

Whether he writes about old houses in Decatur or his first prairie farm house, parks or pickup trucks, Lincoln or lilacs, chili parlors or transplanted oriental cuisine, Guillory—like an archaeologist—sees each subject as a complex series of strata overlaying a topography of history and dreams. Unlike those other diggers, however, who in order to reveal the context and associations of each artifact must carefully destroy the site, Guillory makes visible and audible the ghostly images of people, places, products, and processes which he discovers lurking just beneath the present grade.

A native of southern Louisiana, who came to Illinois to teach at Millikin University, in Decatur, in 1972, Guillory brings a special level of attentiveness to the subtitles of his adopted home. One of the elements of the book that helps make it particularly available and inviting for the reader is the continual linking of one experience with another, long the practice of persons exploring new lands, finding paradigms for the new and unexpected in forms already known. But even the Illinois native, sharing Guillory's journey, will find exotic images everywhere underfoot: Amish aesthetics, a photography gallery in a saw repair shop, the co-evolution of church steeples and silos, Lincoln under rocks, pickles as works of art, and pickup trucks as Thoreauvian democratic expression in a "potholed universe."

Throughout, Guillory's language resonates with both the concrete physical detail of the present and the "inevitable fantasies" of a rich inner life of memory

and imagination. These elements are brought together especially finely in his painterly descriptions of nature, where rectangular red barns and plain white steeples punctuate gentle prairie horizons, where autumn light transforms misty grey lines of bushes into explosions of deer, where the banks of the Sangamon River are scored for the "purple harmony" of redbud blossoms.

Living with Lincoln will undoubtedly appeal to both the reader of Illinois literature and the local historian wishing to share values for the past, but it may just as well appeal to persons with eclectic interests in folklore, food, gardening, home repair, auto mechanics, and other mythic visions. The reader will find this an attractive and tastefully designed volume with clear, though slightly small, typography. And after the reading, like a good concert or fiddle tune, something will linger, a tangible audible memory—like the "thunk and scrape" of a Halliday Wind Engine atop a trumpet vine wrapped windmill tower, "singing," in the words of Guillory's friend Harold Orvis, "singing all through the night."

Steve Fay
Cuba, Illinois.

CONTRIBUTORS

WAYNE WHEELER is Professor of Sociology at the University of Nebraska-Omaha. He is a leading authority on communal societies in the United States and on the writings of Alexis de Tocqueville. Currently he is lecturing in political science, sociology, and American studies at the University of Vaxjo in Sweden, where he is also continuing his research in Swedish-American immigration.

H. ARNOLD BARTON is Professor of History at Southern Illinois University at Carbondale and editor, since 1974, of the *Swedish-American Historical Quarterly* (prior to 1982 the *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly).* He has written extensively on the history of the Swedes and other Scandinavians in America.

RONALD E. NELSON is a Professor of Geography at Western Illinois University and a former editor of the *Journal of Geography.* He was editor and coauthor of *Illinois: Land and Life in the Prairie State,* a geography textbook. His studies of Bishop Hill began with his dissertation research in the mid-1960s. While on sabbatical in early 1987 he did further research in Bishop Hill and assisted in the preparation of the "Swedes in Illinois" exhibit in the Colony Steeple Building.

RONALD E. NELSON is the Executive Director of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association. He received a Masters degree from the State University of New York at Oneonta, Cooperstown Graduate Programs in Museum Administration. He has spent the past thirty years engaged in the preservation of Bishop Hill both as scholar and restoration contractor.

JON WAGNER is an Associate Professor of Anthropology at Knox College. He has conducted resident fieldwork in a contemporary Indiana religious commune and has been involved in both archeological and historical research on Bishop Hill beginning in 1973. He is the editor of *Sex Roles in Contemporary American Communes* (Indiana University Press, 1982) and has authored journal articles and conference papers in the field of communal studies.

ELISE SCHEBLER DAWSON until the spring of 1989 was the Curator at the Bishop Hill Heritage Association. She is currently Curator of Education at the State Historical Society of Iowa at Des Moines.

YOLANDA ORTEGA is Coordinator of the Bishop Hill Heritage Association. She holds a Bachelors degree in Art from Knox College. She was the project coordinator for the lecture series published in this issue of *Western Illinois Regional Studies* and will be managing editor of a new journal on Bishop Hill to be published in 1990 by the Association.